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HENRY CAESAR.

BY WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

I.

HIGH in the Palace of the Popes at Avignon, in a small chamber that was very richly tapestried, sat, on a certain day near the threshold of Summer in the year of Grace 1313, Pope Clement the Fifth.

He was alone, seated in a cushioned and finely carved chair, and his face was contorted with pain. He was a man dying from an incurable inward disease, and knew it; nevertheless, he showed it little to those about him, and not at all in public. He had a long, cadaverous face, with deeply sunken dark eyes under brows meeting in an habitual, worried frown over a high-bridged, Caesaresque nose; his lips were well moulded but sensual, and his chin, under them, was strong. It was the face of a man who, though he was barely fifty, had travelled into the innermost labyrinth of suffering, but been embittered by his wanderings there rather than spiritually exalted, and the bitterness had become a kind of obstinacy. A Frenchman, he had been Bishop of Bordeaux before his election, and at that time a subject, therefore, of England, and it had been hoped that his freedom from Italian prejudice would make him a Pope of more European sympathy and understanding. But his painful and terrible malady had supplied in the place of the old Italian bias a bias of an even more warped centralisation. His very astuteness in policy was little less than a pathological double dealing.

His spasm over, he stretched out a thin, graceful hand towards a small silver bell upon the marble table at his side. But before ringing it, he paused, his fingers just touching it, and gazed into space, frowning. Then, with a sigh and a shrug of the shoulders under his white cape, he rang the bell firmly.

It was answered by a short, corpulent, elderly French priest.

'Is the Archbishop here?' asked the Pope.

'Yes, Holiness.'

'I will see him at once—and do not admit Father Bernardino until he has gone.'

The priest withdrew, softly rather than silently, to return in a moment and announce, almost confidentially, so low was his tone: 'His Grace the Archbishop-Elector of Treves!' After which he as softly withdrew again, leaving the two alone.

The man whom he had ushered in was dressed in a purple robe, sashed in black, and a large, richly chased, jewelled and ornamental cross of shining gold hung by a delicate golden chain from his neck. He was tall and well-built, with a masterful and yet sly face. As was the Pope, he was clean-shaven; and a bush of greying, dark hair enclosed his tonsure.

They greeted one another with ceremony, a little warily. Then, motioning his visitor to sit, the Pope opened the business between them without further preliminary, speaking in a soft and yet determined tone.

'Your brother is outwearying my patience, Baldwin.'

The Archbishop shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands.

'I am unhappy to learn as much, Holiness,' he said, 'but not surprised. Nor did I receive your summons in blindness. Let us speak freely.'

'I ask for no better,' replied the Pope. 'First, tell me : what is your own latest news of him ?'

'That he is in camp at Pisa,' answered the Archbishop, his eyes involuntarily staring, and then narrowing. 'What is it has happened since *that* news of him ?' he asked anxiously.

'He has put Robert of Naples to the ban of the Empire !' said the Pope quietly, and the Archbishop drew in his breath through his teeth as if from a sudden physical hurt.

'King Robert ?' the Archbishop whispered, half awed, half incredulous.

'There is no doubt of it,' returned Clement. 'I have it from a sure source—and only in advance of your brother's own courier, who, I am informed, has been taken ill on the road.'

'King Robert !' repeated the Archbishop, still in a whisper. 'But why, Holiness, why ?' he asked in his ordinary tones, master once more over his own composure.

'This is a time, Baldwin,' said the Pope, leaning forward in his chair, 'for plain speaking. First, let us go back a little and refresh our memories. When Albert of Austria was murdered by his nephew John of Suabia at the Bridge of Brugg and the question of electing the new Emperor became unexpectedly insistent—for the murder was so untimely that we had no King of the Romans already in our eye for the future—I think it was yourself who suggested your brother. Was it not ?' he asked sharply, his face a little contorted, but perhaps from a twinge of pain rather than in malice.

'I do not deny it, Holiness,' replied Baldwin of Treves uneasily and yet with a show of firmness. 'Right from boyhood Henry had seemed of a quiet and passive character.'

The Pope laughed drily, and leaned back again more comfortably in his chair.

'And since we needed an Emperor of a quiet and passive character we swayed the election in his favour,' he said.

'It cost me a great deal of money,' the Archbishop muttered. 'Peter of Mayence, I remember, was very stubborn ! And Henry has not yet repaid me an English pound of it.'

'Nor me a Christian obedience,' said the Pope.

There was a brief pause.

'We have both of us been . . . disappointed,' murmured Clement.

'I have sometimes wondered,' said the Archbishop, as though thinking out aloud, 'whether it has been the influence of his wife. Once I did certainly think so, but since—rest her soul !—Margaret of Brabant is dead, and he still persists in the same . . . what shall I say ? . . .'

'“Characteristics ?”' suggested the Pope with a faint smile.

'The apt word, Holiness,' the Archbishop went on, bowing slightly, and he laughed before continuing : 'So I can only suppose that I never knew my brother.'

'You parted young,' said Clement, 'you to Mother Church and he to his patrimony. Still, it is a pity,' he added with a sharper look, 'that you were not more intimate. We should have had less of a coil now.'

It was both a sigh and a rebuke in one, and the Archbishop flushed.

'What will the King of Naples do ?' he asked, abruptly changing the subject.

'What *we* cannot,' answered the Pope grimly. 'Laugh ! Robert dearly loves a quarrel, with cause or without, and now he has cause. But here lies the point, Baldwin : the Papacy has interests in Naples, and I looked to the Emperor to respect them. If I side with your brother, I lose a support dear to my heart and my projects ; if I side with the

King of Naples, I lose my tempering voice in the counsels of the Empire. Your brother has forced the issue. To make his ban effective he and I must stand side by side : and I cannot so stand with him. It is against my interests, Baldwin—yet it is bad for Christendom for Pope and Emperor to be at odds. I say he has forced the issue without due regard for my position.'

The Archbishop fidgeted in his seat. He was by no means unconcerned : to be rebuked by the Pope was an unpleasantness ; to have been duped, as he conceived it, by his brother, was almost as undignified as an unexpected buffet in the face from one of his own chaplains. But before he could frame an answer consonant with his own pride and independence, the Pope, in a kind of paroxysm of spiteful anger, burst out :

'I tell you, I thought we had an Emperor of good wax that we could shape as we would, a man blindly pious—as so he seemed—a man of no imperial blood, who might be so dazzled by his sudden elevation that he would play with his purple as a child might with a glittering toy, while the business of Europe could be played on our own fingers like the string in a game of cat's cradle ! And such a man *was* Henry, Count of Luxemburg, until he felt how a sceptre balances in the hand—and then he thought himself Caesar indeed, "Henry Caesar", as he signs his letters to me,' he added with a touch of scorn.

'As he is entitled to sign,' interposed the Archbishop softly. 'We *made* him Emperor !'

'In the hope and expectation of a catspaw !' said Clement bluntly, and looked at the Emperor's brother with a challenging, direct gaze.

Baldwin of Luxemburg and Treves did not avoid the Pope's eyes ; he even faintly smiled into them, but it was

with a smile more astute than pleasant, the hard, shell-like and yet modulated smile of a negotiator.

'Holiness,' he answered quietly, 'my interests as a churchman march with your own; my interests as an Elector march with those of my fellow Electors: and by his mad expedition into Italy—raising his banner, he said, for the composing of Christian faction!—and by there allying himself with the White Party instead of the Black, my brother has disappointed the churchman in me and failed the Elector. I, too, expected him to be more malleable, Holiness. Yet,' he continued, spreading out his hands, 'he is my brother. I would bring him to reason rather than set in motion too heavy a . . . punishment.'

'And if he will not be brought to reason?' asked the Pope gently, though his lips, as he spoke, quivered from an inward gripe.

'What has your Holiness in mind?' inquired Baldwin, and smoothed his robes with a jewelled, beautiful hand.

'What I have already done,' replied Clement, 'and it was to tell you of it, Baldwin, that I bade you to this private conference. I would not take so good a friend by surprise.'

The Pope's voice was a little malicious, as the Archbishop well appreciated, and yet there was a certain sincerity in the statement, even if only a politic sincerity. That, too, the Archbishop recognised.

'What is it your Holiness has done?' he whispered.

'I have excommunicated the Emperor,' said the Pope.

II.

Waleran was not happy. An esquire in the semi-military household of the Archbishop-Elector of Treves, he was used to a kind of romantic splendour in his dress and to riding a

horse of good strain ; as it was, he was garbed as an itinerant medical quack and mounted upon an ass.

Still, there was the other side to the medal : he was not cooped within a castle but on the highway in beautiful weather ; and he was upon a mission of such confidence and importance that he might well look to a substantial reward at the end of it. More than once during his journey—and he was now within two days' ride of the Emperor's camp—he had wondered why he had been chosen by his master for so secret and confidential a task. At first he had only too willingly put it down to his merits ; but reflection had soon told him that more probably it was because he alone, of all the archiepiscopal soldiery, could speak Italian, it being indeed his mother-tongue in the truest sense, for his mother was a Genoese. He was as much used, moreover, to hearing 'Valerano' from her lips as 'Waleran' from his father's, so that the name 'Valerano' as a disguise had the merit of being familiar and not likely to give him away by his not recognising it at a critical moment.

He wished that the Archbishop had told him a little more. To some extent he was carrying out his commission in the dark—and at the thought he laughed, the landscape was so bathed in sunlight. The trees, though still fresh in their summer crowns, were already wearying of the monotonous, golden heat. If only there were a breeze, he grumbled to himself, or an inn within sight.

He carried no letter, only a message memorised word by word : 'Beware of the Pulcian Mountain.' It made no sense to him ; but that was his secret mission—to breathe those five words in the Emperor's ear in the midst of relating the ordinary news of his brother's health and delivering the gossip of the archiepiscopal and electoral court.

A courier, he knew, had preceded him by a day, bearing a letter to the Emperor, and ordered to founder a dozen horses if necessary, speed having been impressed upon him as essential. Dietrich was the courier ; and Waleran promised himself a carouse with Dietrich if they met in the Emperor's camp.

It was only towards the beginning of dusk that he came to an inn at last, but it was the poorest of poor places, little more than an elongated hovel with stabling attached. Cursing underbreath, he was about to lead his ass towards the entrance into the stable courtyard, which was as full of muck and fouled straw as an ill-kept byre, when he heard running footsteps and a light call in a girl's voice.

He turned swiftly, and saw a girl with uncovered head coming towards him. She broke into a little run as soon as she knew that she had been noticed.

'Oh, sir,' she cried breathlessly when she had reached his side, 'for the love of Our Lady come to our help.'

'What is the trouble, damsel?' he asked.

'Oh, doctor, good doctor, there is a man grievously hurt in my sister's cottage. When we saw you ride by and knew by your dress what you are, we praised God—and I have run after you. Oh, come, for the love of Heaven!'

His disguise as a wandering quack, he reflected, had its disadvantages ; but he had not the heart to refuse her. Besides, as a soldier and not unfamiliar with wounds, he might, if, as he shrewdly suspected, the man had been stabbed, be at least of a certain practical help.

'Who is it?' he asked, as he turned, and, leading his ass, walked at her side. 'Your father or your brother?'

'Oh, no,' she answered quickly, 'a stranger. We found him this morning, unconscious outside the door. He must

have been trying to arouse us when his senses left him. It isn't far—that cottage over there.'

'Have you had the priest to him?' he asked.

'No,' she replied. 'He made us swear not to fetch any priest: the very naming of a priest seemed to make him worse. He was in a frenzy until we promised. At least, so much as we could understand,' she added. 'He is a foreigner, an Englishman or a German.'

Probably one of the Emperor's mercenaries, thought Waleran, a straggler.

'How is he hurt?' he inquired. 'Stabbed?'

'Stabbed,' she echoed. 'But here we are. Please enter, good doctor.'

He entered—to be twice shocked: in the first place the man was dead; in the second he was Dietrich.

He examined the body swiftly in the fading light. Dietrich had been stabbed in the side, and though the cottage-woman and her sister had done their best to bandage him, he had clearly been beyond their unskilled aid. Indeed, Waleran doubted whether a qualified surgeon could have saved him. He drew the dead man's riding-cloak over the grey, contorted face, and turned to the two sisters, who were standing at the doorway of the poor room, staring in. He looked at them curiously. There must, he thought, be some ten years' difference between their ages. Both were tall and slim, but while the younger was dark, the elder was swarthy, with a large nose and a sullen expression. He had a sudden guess that they might be half-sisters—as, subsequently, he found was the truth. Each, in her way, was handsome, but the younger alone was femininely appealing, the other having an almost masculine carriage and grim self-containedness, and Waleran at once took a dislike to her.

'There is nothing to be done,' he said curtly, 'except to

bury him, and that, by your leave, I will do myself in the still of the dark.'

'For which I shall truly thank you,' answered the elder sister, unbending a little, while the younger unfeignedly shuddered.

'I must find a lodging for the night,' he said. 'Tomorrow, I am for Pisa.'

'After you have buried him,' the elder sister replied, 'you can have his pallet.'

He did not exactly fancy the suggestion, but it would be no worse than the inn.

'But there is my ass,' he said.

'We have an outhouse.'

He thought for a moment, and then accepted the offer. It would at least give him a chance of investigating the circumstances of Dietrich's murder—for it could be nothing less. But whether by a highway robber, or by one deliberately sent to take the letter which he carried, in which case either a spy of the King of Naples or of the Pope, it was impossible to determine.

But first he had to make sure whether the letter was missing or not. He searched the dead man's clothing, the two sisters still looking on. He found nothing, and said so.

'There is a purse,' murmured the younger sister from the doorway.

'It was empty,' said her elder casually. 'Here it is,' she added, and took an empty steel-meshed purse from her bosom and handed it over to Waleran, stepping a little into the room to do so.

He looked at her as he took it, but she showed no embarrassment. He knew that he would never be able to bring the theft home to her, and shrugged his shoulders.

'You had better keep it,' he said gruffly. 'It is not mine.'

He handed it back, and she returned to her place beside her sister.

'O Marietta . . .' he heard the younger begin in a low voice.

'Peace, Lisa!' whispered her sister fiercely. 'We go to prepare your supper,' she went on over her shoulder to Waleran, and the two moved away from the door.

Left alone, Waleran searched his dead friend more carefully, but still failed to find the Archbishop's letter to the Emperor. He straightened himself, and sighed. There was nothing to do except to bury the body in secret.

He went outside to his tethered and patient ass. It was now quite dark.

'This way,' said a soft voice, and Lisa came out with a lantern.

She led him to an outhouse behind the cottage, set down the lantern, went quickly away, and then returned with a bucket of water.

He thanked her, and began unloading the donkey of its panniers. Then he fed him and let him drink. The girl stayed, watching him care for his beast, and he began to question her.

'Do you live alone with your sister?'

'Yes. She is a widow.'

'Have you no father or mother?'

'Both died together, doctor, in the last plague,' she answered sadly, and he purposely allowed a slight pause to intervene. Then he returned to his questioning.

'I think you are not happy, damsel, with your sister.'

It was too dark in the outhouse to see her face, and the rays from the lantern at their feet did not reach up so far.

'No,' she replied, and turned suddenly and ran indoors.

Looking about him he caught sight of a spade standing up-

right in the earth beside the outhouse door. He wondered, a little sardonically, if it had been planted there by Marietta to remind him of his task to come. He made a quick decision, took the spade, and strode across the little plot of ground at the back of the cottage. It was about half an acre in extent, and a narrow brook ran at the bottom of it beside three or four olive trees. A moon in its third quarter had by now begun to rise, and he could see sufficiently for his purpose. Near one of the olive trees he started to dig.

‘Do you usually dig at night?’ asked a gentle voice.

Waleran looked up sharply. On the other side of the narrow brook stood a priest, garbed as a Dominican. A pony was browsing at a little distance off.

‘Only when necessary,’ returned Waleran coolly, and he continued his digging.

‘You are in haste, I see, to finish,’ said the priest. ‘I wonder if I can help you . . . later.’

The grave by that time was nearly dug, and Waleran rested upon the spade, and he looked across at the priest with more attention. There had been something in the other’s tone that had suggested an unwelcome knowledge.

“‘Later’?” he repeated.

‘First to carry the body,’ replied the priest calmly, ‘and then, by your leave, to commit it to the earth with the proper prayers. You see,’ the priest went on, ‘I saw the poor man taken in by the two women who dwell here. But as I had met the man on the road previously, and been roundly cursed for my attempts at friendliness, I knew I should not have been pleasantly received at his bedside—if they gave him a bed.’

‘I am giving him one now,’ said Waleran through a twisted mouth. ‘Are you the priest in this part?’ he asked.

‘No, a traveller only, a passer-by. I am Father Ber-

nardino,' the priest added with a touch of pride, 'and I am the Emperor's confessor.'

Waleran breathed a sigh of relief. He would be glad of help in his task, and for a priest to pray for his friend; and the Emperor's confessor was not a man, fortunately, of whom he had to be suspicious. He accepted the offer gratefully.

Father Bernardino agilely jumped the little brook, and the two men went into the cottage and presently bore out between them the body of the dead Dietrich, wrapped closely in the cloak which he had worn in life. During their passage out they were joined by Marietta and Lisa who, when Waleran had explained the priest's presence, followed them to the graveside and stood silently watching as the body was lowered into the earth and while the priest murmured the service for the dead. The whole scene was palely and bluishly etched in the moonlight. Then, when Waleran began to fill in the grave, the two sisters returned into the cottage after extending an invitation to Father Bernardino to join Waleran and themselves at their supper.

The meal was meagre, consisting of goat's-milk cheese and salad, and a bottle of the coarse local wine. But the two travellers were hungry and thankful of any sufficient breaking of their fast.

At first they ate in silence, then the priest turned to Waleran with a questioning smile.

'Have you come far, sir doctor?' he asked.

Waleran, about to reply unguardedly that he had come directly from Avignon, suddenly checked himself, he knew not why, and answered instead, with a simulated laugh:

'From everywhere, father, it seems; certainly from Bohemia.'

'And you find—ahem!—profitable patients on the way?'

'Not when they are already—dead,' answered Waleran pointedly, and then, more nonchalantly, added: 'Still, body and soul, as you see, father, are yet together.'

'What know you of the healing art?' pursued the Emperor's confessor, genuinely curious even in his sarcasm, and there had assuredly been sarcasm in the question. Travelling quacks were not beloved of the priesthood, which scented in them an inimical influence in the countryside.

'Well,' replied Waleran truthfully, 'I can wash a wound and bind it with the best.' Then he added, a little slyly: 'And I can sometimes persuade old women that a particular salve will make away with a wart.'

There was no laughter at his remark, scarcely amusement, and he glanced up from his food to find Father Bernardino regarding him with a somewhat grim intentness. Was the priest, thought Waleran suddenly, taking him for a Black, or Gueff, spy, and, consequently, as a good servant of the Emperor, being suspicious? The idea tickled him, and he laughed involuntarily.

'What is amusing you?' asked Father Bernardino, and suspicion was now definitely riding in his glance.

'I am laughing,' answered Waleran, 'because you are not the first, father, to take me for too young for knowledge! But I was the favourite pupil of Melchior Claes of Prague,' he added truthfully, though Melchior Claes was no physician, ambulant or other.

'What are you, then, by birth?' asked the priest swiftly and as if by way of riposte.

'My mother is a Genoese and my father came from Brabant,' Waleran replied, again truthfully.

The Emperor's confessor nodded as if satisfied, and Waleran felt that the tension had eased.

Both travellers being tired, they did not linger in gossip

after the meal, the priest taking leave at once, for he would sleep, he informed Marietta, at a certain monastery some two miles farther on, whither he had been bound when he saw the grave being dug and had offered his help both as a Christian and a priest.

'If, as you say, you are bound for the Emperor's camp,' he said courteously to Waleran, 'we may chance to meet again on the road, for I am returning to him after an absence to visit my ailing mother.'

After he had gone, Waleran retired to the pallet on which Dietrich had died only a few hours previously. As a soldier he felt no qualms: he had slept in worse circumstances; nevertheless, he did not sleep well, but that came from seeing the face of Lisa too often and too disturbingly.

III.

When, the next morning, he went out to prepare his ass for the day's journeying, he found her in the outhouse, stroking the beast and feeding him.

She shrank away as he entered, and her eyes seemed dumbly to beg for his forgiveness.

'I couldn't help it,' she murmured. 'He is so gentle an ass. I could hug him.'

'A good ass, yes,' he answered, and patted the girl on the shoulder in reassurance that she had done no harm. She winced away from his touch.

'What is the matter?' he asked. 'I am no sorcerer!'

She slipped her dress from her shoulder in mute reply. The flesh was wealed.

'What has happened?' he muttered, and his eyes were suddenly blazing with anger.

'She beat me. She is always beating me. Oh, take me

with you—anywhere, so that it is away from here, away from *her*. If you go without me, I shall drown myself. The brook falls into a deep pool over there. I shall drown myself,' she repeated. 'She has beaten me ever since father died, day by day, for I never please her. I shall drown myself. By the Mother of God, I swear it! Take me away, take me away!' she urged passionately, and her fingers clutched at his hand.

There was his pity and anger at her tale, and there was her attraction for him: either alone he might have combated; together they were irresistible to his youth and adventurousness.

'Go and get ready,' he said briefly, and began to put the panniers on the back of the ass.

'My bundle's here,' she answered shyly, and showed it in a corner of the outhouse.

'Then let us go . . . without leavetaking,' he said, and presently he led the ass forth, and Lisa was mounted upon it. They forded the brook at her suggestion, being hidden the while from the cottage by the outhouse and the little group of olives. After crossing a field that sloped downwards, so that again they were hidden, they came to the high-road circuitously and about a half-mile away.

'Now for Pisa—and fortune—and love!' cried Waleran merrily, and he kissed his hand to a lark that was singing overhead.

IV.

A little later on he was singing himself. He was no minstrel, but he could troll one or two military camp-songs, and as they were in his paternally native Brabant their incomprehensibility saved Lisa a blush or two; moreover,

since the tunes at least had a gay lilt, now and then she added her own southern treble to his more northern baritone when the refrains returned for the fourth or fifth time, for the songs were not short, being capable also of additional verses according to the singer's bawdy ingenuity.

He was in the midst of one of these extendable marching-songs when they were overtaken by a solitary traveller on a lean, black horse.

He was sufficiently remarkable in appearance for Waleran to stare at him as if fascinated. He was dark of complexion and clean-shaven, with a strong, pointed chin, eyebrows that slanted upwards, a long, depressed nose with a high bridge, and lines like the wake of a boat dropping away from either side to the corners of the thinnish mouth with its protruding underlip. His eyes were piercing and arrogant, and yet at the same time meditative and sad; and his voice, when he gave Waleran and Lisa greeting, peculiarly and unexpectedly melodious and sweet.

'Whither travel you?' he asked courteously, and as if moved by the politeness of the road rather than by any worse curiosity.

'To Pisa,' replied Waleran. 'And you, sir?' he asked in his turn.

'To Pisa likewise,' answered the other. 'What was it you were singing? I take an interest in songs.'

'A Brabançon marching-ditty,' said Waleran.

'And where did you learn *that*?' instantly asked the other with lifted brows. 'A salve-quack and a war-song are not usually so well acquainted.'

'I was taught it, and many another, too, by a straggler,' explained Waleran warily and on the spur of the moment.

His new companion seemed satisfied, and presently, as they went on together, appeared to fall into an abstraction,

and, so strong was his personality, neither Waleran nor Lisa cared to break it, and themselves grew almost prim in their silence, Lisa riding the ass, and Waleran walking beside it.

The stranger was dressed completely in black, with a black, flowing cloak without sleeves, and a black skull-cap. His hair about it was grizzled. He might have been an ecclesiastic, except that he wore a sword and, besides, had nothing about him of the priest's shuttered self-satisfaction, for his eyes were vivid and sometimes mocking, and in his abstraction he occasionally muttered words which, though nowise contrary to morality of thought, were definitely secular in sympathy.

His unclerical character, indeed, was all the more plain when they were met, about a mile farther on, by the Emperor's confessor, who had reined in his pony at a cross-roads, evidently waiting for them—at least, waiting for Waleran and Lisa, for he seemed taken by surprise to find them in the company of the stranger, a man whom evidently he knew, since he greeted him with a great show of respect, which considerably astonished Waleran, the man in black providing no indications, either in manner or attire, of rank or position, and yet Father Bernardino was almost obsequious in his deference.

For a while they conversed apart, during which time Waleran watched narrowly, wondering who the stranger could be. Instinctively he was glad that his own disguise had apparently stood the test; neither the Emperor's confessor nor the other seemed in the least doubtful of his quackdom—nor, for the matter of that, had Lisa.

He smiled to himself, and looked forward to appearing before her in his full dress as an esquire of the high and mighty Archbishop-Elector of Treves. He was a man to

do credit to any girl ; and she, by her beauty alone, was a girl to do credit even to an Emperor's esquire. He was well pleased suddenly with life, and would have broken out again into song had he not been more than a little awed by the presence of the two men riding about two horses' length ahead, deep in intimate speech.

Suddenly the voice of the man in black was raised in more rhetorical tones, so that what he said could be heard plainly by Waleran behind.

'How long shall she sit solitary, liberty's widow, my city, my fair Florence ! Woe to thee, city of tyrannies, city of ingratitude, city of mean thoughts and unclean hands ! Death to the Blacks !' he thundered.

Father Bernardino, glancing covertly back an instant to see if his companion's outburst had provoked too great an attention, answered in a low voice and apparently placatorily, for the other immediately showed signs of impatience, and his reply was again completely audible.

"God *shall* prosper the Emperor, the bringer of peace, the lover of freedom, God's own weapon of justice upon Earth ! The Devil take Robert of Naples and the Pope !"

Once again the Emperor's confessor spoke placatingly : but the man in black burst out with the same vehemence as before :

'If ever a man served the interests of Heaven, then John of Suabia's murder of Albert of Austria was an act of all-governing Fate, since it led to the election at last of a prince with an ideal instead of a policy—and oh, how sick is the world of policies !'

'You speak like the poet that you are, Messer Dante Alighieri,' cried Father Bernardino, and his scorn rasped in his raised voice. 'You impugn Christ's Vicar in his fatherly shepherding !'

'I accuse him of no true shepherding whatever,' replied Dante. 'I accuse him, too, of a policy—and God is not served by a policy!'

'Poet . . . ' repeated the Emperor's confessor, scornful still, though careful to remain obsequious to one whom the Emperor himself signally regarded with favour. 'You poets do not deal in hard, earthly facts.'

'And you priests only too much!' retorted Dante, and his scorn was the equal of the other's and less masked, moreover, in outward politeness. 'At least we suffer for our dreams,' the poet went on, 'and sufficiently, father, to know how steep are the stairs in another's house, and how harsh is the bread of exile!'

For sole answer, or evasion, the priest pointed ahead. The Emperor's camp had suddenly come into view as they turned the hill-shoulder of some terraced olive orchards.

V.

The Emperor had decided to break camp at Pisa and march on Florence, that nest of Guelfs, and once Florence was subdued he would be free to attack Robert of Naples.

But he made his preparations with a heavy heart. He did not believe in war, and was forced by circumstances to make it; he believed in universal justice and fraternity, and was compelled to seem the denier of his ideals by his actions. He felt lonely, too: his dead wife had been his only confidante.

His last act before he struck his tents was to visit the Prior of one of the Pisan monasteries, an old man to whom he had taken a liking, and in whose spirituality he had found an echo of his own hopes for the world.

'I am come to bid farewell, father,' he said, as the Prior

greeted him at the monastery gate. 'Let me have an hour of peace before I depart on the business of war.'

'Come within to my chamber, my lord,' answered the Prior.

'No,' said the Emperor, shaking his head with a smile. 'It is so hot a day; let us sit in your cloisters.'

Bidding his attendants to wait for him, Henry passed on with the Prior into a place of utter quiet, colonnaded on each of its four equal sides. A broad seat of stone ran continuously under the four colonnades, against the wall, broken only by the two facing arches of entrance into that square of meditation. The sun blazed into the paved middle and deep into two sides. They sat down on the stone seat on that side where it was most shaded. Two monks, who had been pacing the cloisters in conversation, with folded hands and hooded faces, withdrew hastily when they saw the Prior and the Emperor make their approach.

For some while Henry was silent, and the Prior began to study him as though endeavouring to make a new assessment of the man sitting so quietly beside him. He knew him to be at the crisis of his fortunes, and was hoping that his strength of personality would be sufficient for the task which, in defiance of the Pope and the greater fiefs of the Empire alike, he had set himself.

Thus newly assessing his companion—but finding no quality of which he had not been already fully aware and appreciative—the Prior saw a man handsome and well proportioned, with reddish, short hair and a squarish face, a broad, lofty forehead, and arched brows over blue eyes, one of which was slightly disfigured by a squint. This was more apparent when he was angered or particularly excited, or in ill-health; normally it was hardly noticeable unless deliberately observed, either from curiosity, keenness of

sight—as with an artist—or out of malice. But, in whatever category such observation might fall, he never seemed put out of countenance by it. Nevertheless, as the Prior knew, he was not of a placid temper, though magnanimous when touched or stirred at heart, and was sensitive enough in certain other ways : for instance, to any slighting of his imperial dignity.

‘Sometimes I despair,’ said the Emperor suddenly, ‘despair of mankind as the instrument of God’s purpose.’

‘God made them in His own image, sire, and to be His servants,’ murmured the ecclesiastic.

‘And they look for pay for their service,’ said Henry, and it was a kind of retort, ‘when they should serve for love and in worship.’

‘This is no new accusation,’ answered the Prior with a smile. The Emperor sighed.

‘I hoped to awake them,’ he said. ‘I hoped to arouse their better parts by my trumpet. I was surprised, completely,’ he went on, speaking very simply, ‘when my brother told me, after the murder of Albert of Austria, that the Electors had *me* in their minds as a possible candidate for the imperial throne. I cannot tell you my thoughts : they were so medleyed, father, so upsetting to all my habit of life. Do I weary you?’ he asked abruptly, and his squint was suddenly noticeable as he flashed at the Prior a look of almost suspicious interrogation.

‘In no way, my son : continue.’

‘I never understood,’ pursued Henry, ‘my brother’s interest in pushing me forward with such zeal. We had not been intimates, and our tastes had diverged from boyhood. My wife insisted always that there was some imagined benefit to himself in my becoming Emperor, and that he had my imperial value reckoned to the last groat.’

'Is that surprising?' asked the Prior. 'Is it nothing to have one's brother Holy Roman Emperor?'

'My wife was not thinking of Baldwin's pride,' answered the Emperor, 'but of some more material consideration.'

He sighed deeply, and added:

'I miss her from my side terribly; she was a wise, as well as a good, woman.'

The Prior crossed himself and murmured a prayer for the soul of the recently dead Empress.

'I have begun to think,' muttered Henry, 'that my brother's expectations were soon and very sadly disappointed.'

He smiled drily, and then instantly was stern.

'As they deserved to be,' he went on, 'and as the expectations of all the Electors deserved to be—and as the Pope's likewise deserved to be. I was never the heavy-witted country gentleman that Baldwin believed, and as no doubt he reported me. I was always a dreamer of dreams, pondering upon how dreams such as I had might be made practical for the world. For I am no poet as is our Dante of the Alighieri, and think nothing of a dream as a dream; it must have a reality. But, in counterpoise,' he added, turning to the Prior and holding one knee in his clasped hands, 'the reality which I most value must be the result of a dream, a vision. And I *had* a vision: in my youth, blind and vague; in my manhood, blunted by lack of opportunity—and then, O miracle, I was elected . . . Emperor! Father,' he concluded in a lower tone, 'it was God spoke!'

He unclasped his hands from about his knee, and leant back against the shadowed wall.

'I used to dream,' Henry continued, 'of a Europe at peace, with a fraternal Pope and Emperor working side by side for the good of mankind, true shepherds of the world.'

I thought of them as the twin presiders over a League of All Peoples, with no more wars, and no armies except one for the Emperor to keep a universal justice. A dream? A dream, Prior, which, if carried out, might be the most practical reality ever created by the wits of men. I had often pondered it, and laughed at it—or, I mean, laughed at myself for dreaming it, I, so insignificant a man, a mere Count of Luxemburg. And then, as unexpectedly as an arrow out of an ambush, to be elected as Emperor! I am not yet, father, after four years of imperial power, out of the wonder of it!’

The Prior did not break the brief pause which fell. He knew that a single word might destroy Henry’s mood of self-revelation which, interesting to him as a student of men for its own sake, was, he recognised also, of still more importance for being a relief to an overburdened spirit.

‘I began my emperorship,’ Henry went on, ‘much as a knight-errant rides out on an emprise. I had a high heart and a vision. I had hopes, too, of the newly elected Clement, a Frenchman, and resident at Avignon and not Rome. Our interests, I thought, would have the same ideal of necessity: the pacification and spiritualising of Italy, that breeding-ground of political dissension and ecclesiastical simony. I thought likewise that my dream would find support among the great vassals of the Empire, that when once the trumpet had been sounded against the open scandals of the world, there would be no hanging back but a response from sea to sea. For peace and peaceableness would be of benefit to all men, surely, and to all states. What, hitherto, had been lacking had been an Emperor who *saw* that, an Emperor willing to lend his utmost power to bring it to pass, an Emperor determined to be the scourge of all maleficence and injustice. So many of the Emperors have either

inherited wars that, for honour's sake, they have had to continue waging, or been themselves men of dissension and self-seeking, glorying because the dissensions of others gave their own wanton ambitions the opportunities to fatten ! But I had inherited no war ; I was entangled in no dynastic alliances ; I was seeking no favourable chance for pouncing upon a weak neighbour. I was an Emperor free of all the old excuses.'

He paused again, but the sigh that came pat, like an Amen to his speech, was the Prior's, not his.

'But what did I find ?' continued Henry, speaking in a tone more resonant with inner feeling. 'That the alliance with Clement was only an alliance when I went *his* way and helped him in his feud with the Italian cardinalate ; that the imperial fiefdoms would only support me when I espoused this or that quarrel among them, and by supporting one I estranged another ; that my very position as Emperor was only respected in Europe according to my pawnship in Europe's game of political greed. I knew myself suddenly alone—so alone !—in my fight for peace and fraternity. They wanted me, all of them," he added vehemently, 'to be a catspaw. I see now that I was elected merely to fill a place, to be at their use and convenience. But, under God's favour, I *will* give Europe rest from its self-seeking overlords, whether kings or lesser princes, sovereign dukes or equally sovereign—and equally rapacious—republics ! To that end, unwillingly, father, I invaded your Italy, where internecine violence is most rampant and most clearly the sign and symbol of the world's miseries. I found all faction. Instead of any willingness towards peace and unity, they made even my invasion a new excuse for old self-seeking, either by opposing me or by flocking to my banners, according to their hopes. But not all vainly

have I striven towards pacification ; I was even crowned at Rome, which everyone took to be impossible. But always I find one persistent enemy, for my vision clashed with his, and continually he supplies both tinder and spark to the factions of Italy, hoping to weaken my authority and destroy my dream—the Pope ! And now Robert of Naples has joined in the same mischief. They are in a secret league against me, this Clement and this Robert. But I have put Robert to the ban of the Empire !’ he concluded fiercely and yet sorrowfully, and his hands clenched as he searched the Prior’s face for a sign either of sympathy or imperfect understanding, the one or the other. It was a glance full of haughtiness, yet it struck the Prior with a sense of almost intolerable pathos.

He put a hand on the Emperor’s arm, and said :

‘ Did you take your battle as like to be swift and easy ? It will last all your life—and you know it. The only courage is to be found in your soul and in its bond with God. Sire, fight on ! Bring your dream to the world ! The possession of power shall be justified in you !’

A look of mingled relief, pleasure and exaltation came into Henry’s face, but lasted only a moment.

‘ In me !—but in Clement ?’ he cried. ‘ All this runs counter to Clement—and Clement stirred up Robert of Naples to undo me. But I have put the ban on Robert, the ban ! It is my defiance of Clement. What can he do ? Nothing ! He must acquiesce. The ban is final, politically, in Christendom. This clash is the equivalent of a battle of the first magnitude—and Clement has no reserves to fling in against my ban. The day is mine !’

‘ How has the Holy Father taken it ?’ asked the Prior cautiously.

‘ My courier has not yet returned.’

For a little they did not speak again, and the cloisters, if possible, were even more full of sun than before.

VI.

It had been a companionable reverie, that silence between them ; but it was somewhat rudely broken.

Not often does a monastery cloister ring with monkish steps that might be those of a soldier, with the sandals slapping down on the flagstones with vehement tread instead of shuffling along in a seemly humility ; nor does a monk often enter the presence of his superior with cowl thrown back and features blazing with satirical and ruffling excitement. But so it was then.

‘What is the meaning of this ?’ demanded the Prior, rising in wrath and with a certain consternation. ‘Are you mad, or drunk, my son ?’

The monk well might have been either, for he stood before them, swaying on his feet and laughing immoderately.

The Emperor rose in his turn, and advanced towards the monk as though to take him by the shoulders and shake him out of his hysterics—which easily he could have done, being himself tall and burly, and the monk slight of build.

But there was no need to take physical measures, for the monk suddenly ceased laughing and stood, staring at the Emperor with a kind of wistful deprecation. Yet, even then, a satiric smoulder seemed lurking deep down in the gaze, and not as though an aftermath of his hysteria but as if it had lingered on through it from a previous set of thoughts.

‘Brother Johannes, return to your cell,’ ordered the Prior.

‘Are you happy . . . sire ?’ asked the monk in an intense whisper, addressing the Emperor without seeming to have

heard his superior's bidding. 'Are you happy under the weight of the Iron Crown, or unhappy? Whichever you are, thank *me* for it! It was I set it free for your wearing!'

The Emperor's eyes narrowed, and he looked at the Prior questioningly: surely a mad monk was not allowed such liberty?

'Return to your cell!' commanded the Prior more peremptorily, and his countenance was scarlet, his whole mien blazing with anger.

The monk became suddenly cowed, as if his previous vehemence and intensity had been the last leaping of flames in a spirit disciplined henceforward to the requisite ash. He turned humbly away, and with bent head was retracing his steps out of the cloisters when the Emperor's voice rang out with the abruptness of a military command:

'Stay!'

The monk's shoulders stiffened; he swung on his heel. Had his sandals spurs that he should instinctively click them together? Then he stood facing the Emperor and the Prior, with head at first lifted, only to be quickly bowed in a curious, almost mocking, humility.

Henry turned to the Prior.

'Who is this monk?' he demanded.

The Prior's face was puckered and troubled.

'This should not have happened,' he muttered. 'He is constantly sinning against discipline,' he added in a deprecatory aside. 'But this is unpardonable, sire.'

'Who is he?' again demanded Henry, and he had become very imperial in that moment.

'Sire . . . sire . . .' stammered the old man.

'Tell me who he is!' cried Henry, his tone brusque and harsh, and his face pale.

The Prior still hesitating, it was the monk himself who supplied the answer :

‘I am Brother Johannes, called Parricida, and was once that John of Suabia who at the Bridge of Brugg plunged a dagger into your predecessor ! O my mother, why did you so hate my father’s brother that you could prick on your son to dye his hand in the vat of an uncle’s body ?’

With a scream of hysterical remorse the young monk ran pattering out of the cloisters. His screaming and laughing ceased in the distance. The sunlight, goldenly placid, remained : it might have been another actor, left now to hold the stage by the sheer splendour of its great silence.

‘This should never have happened,’ said the Prior, angrily distressed. ‘I shall not forgive myself for my lax rule.’

‘It is no matter,’ replied Henry calmly. ‘I knew he existed—somewhere. Why not here ? He has at least served to remind me that my time for comfort is spent. I must depart, father.’

‘Yes, my son,’ said the Prior, dully, sadly.

They had already turned, side by side, to make their way out under the colonnade when, unannounced, two figures were seen approaching.

‘Ah,’ said the Emperor, with a sigh of pleasure, ‘it is my good confessor—and with him Dante of the Alighieri. Welcome, father ; welcome, poet !’

The confessor made the sign of the cross in the air, while Dante sank on one knee and kissed the Emperor’s outstretched hand.

‘What news ?’ asked Henry, smiling. ‘I trust, father, you left your mother in better health.’

‘By the mercy of Saint Pantaleone, yes, sire,’ replied the confessor. ‘I was able, indeed, to leave her and spend a day

or two with my brother . . . at Avignon. I had not seen him these ten years. A blessed reunion.'

'Avignon?' cried Henry sharply. 'Saw you the Holy Father?'

'I—er—I took that opportunity, sire, for an audience,' answered Father Bernardino meekly, 'and, alas, bring from it a most dread news.'

'The which being?' Henry asked instantly, and Father Bernardino, as he answered him, thought that he had never seen the Emperor's squint more pronounced.

'He has excommunicated you!'

There was a long, deep silence. The Prior was aghast; the poet quivered with Apollonian anger; the confessor stood with folded hands, yet with watchful eyes. The Emperor himself seemed turned to stone.

'So he *had* reserves to fling in against my ban!' He muttered through tightened lips.

'O imperial Henry,' cried Dante, 'such a man and such a deed are fit only for miracle-players to enact in some make-believe of Hell! You, the first Emperor to put the visions of poets into action, to be bitten at heel by this white, tiara'd snake!'

'Hush, good friend,' said Henry, and he laid a hand briefly on the poet's arm, and then strode swiftly, and as though full of purpose, out of the cloisters, noting with a bitter grimace as he went how even the Prior edged a little aside at the passing by of an excommunicated man.

VII.

At the gate by which they had entered Pisa Father Bernardino and Dante Alighieri had already taken leave of their fellow-travellers and ridden on together at a pace which

clearly indicated no further wish for the company of a wandering quack and his doxy. Waleran, knowing within himself how little of a true mountebank he was, shrugged shoulders and laughed, but Lisa was affronted and burst into tears.

To comfort her, he took her to the shops first of all and bought her a necklace of Venetian beads.

'But can you afford it, Valerano?' she asked, open-mouthed when he put it about her neck.

'That—and more!' he answered, smiling at the limpid surprise in her quick pleasure. 'And now to find us a lodging!'

During their search they came to a larger street where there was a crowd collected, and through the crowd, which was staring with all its eyes and shouting a welcome, came a small cavalcade of armed horsemen, clearing the way with the butts of their lances, and in the midst of them rode one on a coal-black horse with magnificent trappings.

'It is the Emperor!' cried Waleran, and made as though to bustle through to the front, leaving the ass in the care of Lisa.

'Not so fast, fellow! Others want to see as well as you,' said a craftsman in the leather apron of an armourer, and he stuck a huge elbow into Waleran's ribs. The crowd was too thick for retaliation; too thick, also, for attracting the Emperor's attention: nor, now that he thought of it more soberly, was it the best moment for approaching him with a secret message for his ear.

He returned to Lisa and the ass, and the search for lodgings was continued in quieter ways.

'Was that the Emperor really, Waleran?' asked Lisa as soon as they had extricated themselves from the press.

'The Emperor Henry? Oh, yes. It was he. I know him,' he boasted.

'You can't deceive me like that !' replied the girl, laughing. 'When a great prince is ill, he doesn't run to a booth in a fair for his physic ! But did you see who were riding with him ?'

'Yes,' he answered. 'Our two companions of yesterday and this morning. But the priest is his confessor, as he told us. There is nothing in that. Who the other is—except for his name, a certain Alighieri—I cannot tell you. A strange fellow. He seemed as if he had come on a journey from Hell itself and was still scorched in the face !'

And Waleran laughed at his own imagination.

'Oh, no,' said Lisa quickly. 'He had too sweet a smile for that. He might have ridden, when he smiled, straight out of the gates of Paradise.'

'We are both too fanciful, sweetheart,' he answered. 'Smiling or not, he can have ridden from no further than Purgatory—and that is enough for any man's strangeness !'

They found a lodging at last, and leaving Lisa to rest there after her ride, he went out to find stabling for the ass and to sell if he could—for now, having safely reached his journey's end, he would no longer have a use for them—the few medical commodities which had served to support his character of quack. He looked about, therefore, for the shop of some apothecary.

At the first to be found he had no good reception.

'I do not buy drugs from wandering mountebanks,' was the contemptuous answer. 'What you carry—dubious at best !—becomes sour from exposure. Go elsewhere !'

At the second he had the same rebuff, a little more violently expressed ; at the third, equally rebuffed, he was nevertheless given a helpful nudge as he left by an apprentice.

'Try old verminous Baldassario—over the bridge——' was the whisper.

Over the bridge, and into what seemed a thieves' quarter, Waleran went, and after some delicate inquiry, not always welcomed, he was directed at last by a brothel-keeper to the recommended Baldassario, verminous in good truth, and very old. But the apothecary was not alone in his dark, dusty, eerie and repulsive shop. A man in a long cloak and with a hood over his face was counting some coins into his hand, evidently in payment for a tiny phial which Waleran, sharp-eyed, had seen carefully tucked away in a long sleeve as he entered.

The man muffled in the cloak turned abruptly on his heel to go ; then, in the doorway, Waleran and he exchanged an equally startled glance. The other half paused, as if to speak, then apparently thought better of it, and departed hurriedly. It was Father Bernardino.

'And what can I do for *thee*, young physician?' asked Baldassario. He had a shaking head, and his voice was high-pitched and mocking.

Waleran quickly explained his business: that he was joining the wars for his better advancement and giving up his attendance at fairs and the like with a tray of quack remedies, and therefore had no further use for his stock-in-trade. They haggled a little, and, Waleran not caring a whit so long as he was rid of the encumbrance, the old man got the better of the bargain. Well pleased, he began to cackle with laughter.

Waleran, in the act of going, turned to ask where was the jest, and the old apothecary, placing a thick finger at the side of his long nose, answered:

'I had taken thee to have the same business as the other, but for all that I have got a good bargain thou art the less profitable, he, he!'

And then his cackle changed summarily into a wheeze.

'And what *was* his business?' asked Waleran curiously. The point, indeed, had teased him all through the bargaining.

'Poison!' wheezed Baldassario.

'Poison!' echoed Waleran in amaze.

'For the rats in a monastery . . . so said he, and he is a priest, so I must believe or be heretic! Little he knew I had seen him before: but I amble about in many places. I saw more in him than thou didst, I warrant, for all thy young eyes.'

'I doubt it,' said Waleran with an involuntary superior air.

'Hey?' cried the old apothecary.

'Was he, or was he not, the Emperor's confessor?' asked Waleran slyly.

Baldassario began to cackle again.

'He, he, so you are not so secret as you believe, Bernardino de Montepulciano! Which, by the scourges of Rehoboam, be good to hear!'

'Bernardino de Montepulciano . . .' repeated Waleran, open-mouthed.

The Pulcian Mountain!

He dashed from the shop as if a legion of devils was at his heels.

VIII.

He hurried to the lodgings where he had left Lisa.

'You must stay here, sweetheart,' he said. 'I have to follow the Emperor immediately.'

Replying only in brusque, inattentive monosyllables to her flood of expostulation and questioning, he undid, in the utmost haste, one of the panniers which he had taken from the ass, flung off his quackish garments, and quickly, with the

trained speed of the soldier, put on his full accoutrement as an esquire of the Archbishop-Elector of Treves. As she saw, her hands went to her mouth in consternation, her eyes opened in startled amaze, and her face, previously flushed, turned dead white.

'Valerano . . . ' she whispered. 'O Valerano . . . '

'Do not question me now,' he besought impatiently as he completed his dressing. 'I have no time to explain anything. But I am not what I seemed.'

Perceiving her white face and almost terrified expression, he felt a quick gush of pitying tenderness, crossed over to her, took her in his arms and kissed her.

'Do not fear, do not doubt,' he said hastily. 'I shall return. Till I do, here is my purse. But I have business of life and death.'

He kissed her again, swiftly buckled on his sword and his spurs, flung his cloak over his shoulders, and was gone.

His first check was to discover that the Emperor had already moved camp. He was no longer in Pisa. As to where he was, the rumours were as contradictory as two scholars on a disputed point in the Latinity of Ausonius. Then he had no horse; and on inquiry, it seemed that all the available horses in Pisa had been requisitioned for the Emperor's baggage-train. Waleran was in despair. Frenziedly he thought of his ass, but knew that it was too tired to carry him further—or quickly!—that day. And now it would soon be dusk.

He chanced at length upon a pair of drunken stragglers.

'Which way to the army?' he asked breathlessly.

They pointed westward, leeringly, with wide sweeps of the arm.

Westward he went, easily outdistancing their lurching steps. He set himself to a marching pace, doggedly, deter-

minedly. Though night was coming on, he knew that there would presently be a moon.

He had marched on thus for some two or three hours when he heard the sound of a horse approaching at his back. He cried out as the rider drew abreast, and put a hand on the bridle-rein, drawing the horse to a standstill.

'Sir . . .' he began. 'Forgive my need . . .' And there he ceased, astonished beyond measure. It was the man in black who had known Father Bernardino. Waleran, at once suspicious, spoke more roughly: 'I must ask you for your horse.'

Dante leaned gauntly down from the saddle and stared into Waleran's face.

'Why, you, Sir Quack?' he said sharply, and in the light of the now rising moon the deeply etched shadows of his face, with the prominent nose and proud chin and jutting underlip, gave him an appearance both grim and sardonic when, in reality, he was only relieved that the encounter was no worse. 'A wandering salve-huckster turned night-hawk?' he went on with a laugh. 'It would need Ovid to sing such a metamorphosis, not I! My theme is the damned, not the reborn! But, good Valerano . . .'

Waleran cut him short.

'I must reach the Emperor in haste. I am one of his brother's esquires, and my mission is urgent. I must take your horse.'

'Are you seeking the Emperor by *this* road?' asked the poet in surprise. 'But he has gone south, towards Siena. I rode part of the way with him.'

'I was told he had marched west.'

'You were misinformed. He is making for Siena,' replied Dante, and his tone was convincing.

Waleran cursed with exasperation, then cried gruffly:

'Come, your horse, sir ! If you are the Emperor's friend, you will not deny my necessity. Or are you the friend of Father Bernardino de Montepulciano ?'

'Of the Emperor,' replied Dante instantly. 'But,' he added, with his brows drawn together, 'you speak as if Father Bernardino . . .'

'The Pope's creature ! Let that suffice . . . Will you dismount, or must I compel you ?'

And Waleran laid his hand on his sword.

Dante dismounted.

'Well, it is Can Grande's horse, not mine,' he said, grimly humorous, 'and, for myself, I am not the first poet to find good rhymes under the moon ! Nor was I going farther,' he added with a dry chuckle, 'than to the monastery there,' and he pointed towards a shadowy building looming in the distance among some cypresses. 'Yet you must not think me a coward,' he went on. 'In my youth I fought at Campaldino . . .'

But the poet spoke to the air about him. Waleran had already leapt into the saddle and was spurring away.

Dante stood for a while in the same spot. He might have been a column of black marble in the moonlight. Yet it was marble that was not cold, but passionate ; and presently, with a gaze fixed on one of the lower stars, though not seeing it, he burst out into fierce, exalted speech :

'O Florence, Florence, do you trust in your defence because that you are girdled in by a contemptible rampart ? What shall it avail you to have girt you with walls and to have fortified yourself with battlements, when, terrible in gold, the eagle shall swoop down upon you, which, soaring now above the Pyrenees, now above Caucasus, now above Atlas, borne up by the breath of Heaven's soldiery, gazed down of old in its flight over the vast expanse of Ocean ?

O imperial eagle ! O mighty Henry ! Exile is at last endurable with this hope of universal justice swooping down upon the villainy of the Earth ! O blessed time ! O heavenly beneficence, that hast sent such a man into this troubled and insane world ! O fraternity ! O peace !'

IX.

Henry had pitched camp at Buonconvento. Restless in the heat of his tent—it was the twenty-fourth day of August—he had climbed the bell-tower of the nearest church in the hope of a little air.

A deeply devout man, the excommunication inwardly troubled him. For all that the Pope was his enemy and, as a man, not sufficiently spiritual for his office, he was yet the Pope, and Henry, as a good son of the Church, did not make the mistake of belittling heavenly powers because of the insufficiency of earthly instruments. He believed in the efficacy of Clement's excommunication of him, that divorce from the Christian community and the comfort of the Mass.

He looked about him at the outspread beauty of the landscape. Bathed in the bright Italian sun, it had the richness of a natural tapestry beyond the petty looms of mortals to imitate. Everything seemed at peace, yet he knew only too well how the first mutters of war were already echoing in to him from the horizon to north, south, east and to west. And all because he had bidden men be politically fraternal—but against their miserable and ephemeral selfishnesses.

The immediate stretch of country was dotted with the activity of his camp ; elsewhere, far away in every direction, reigned beauty, without motion in itself, since there was no wind to stir even the tops of the trees, and without intrusion

into its calm, since there was neither marching of troops nor flight of the inhabitants. There was certainly peace under the shadow of his banners.

He heard steps mounting within the tower ; but, deep in his own thoughts, did not even turn his head when the newcomer emerged behind him, and came and stood at his side. By the dry cough which for some moments he had heard at intervals he knew who it was : his confessor.

After a space of curious, enigmatic silence, Henry turned haggard eyes upon the priest.

'How long, think you, will it continue over me,' he asked in a hollow voice, ' . . . this . . . this exile from the Kingdom of Christ ? '

'Until your quarrel, sire, as I take it, is composed with the Holy Father,' replied the priest firmly, almost briskly, as if he had been long prepared to answer such a question and was glad at last to be free of the responsibility of it.

'How can it be composed,' muttered the Emperor, 'unless the one of us gives way ? He has gone too far to weaken unless *I* weaken ; and for me to weaken were for my soul to deny its mission ! '

'Expediency, sire,' murmured Father Bernardino de Montepulciano, 'has sometimes so great a wisdom that it can outreach enthusiasm in the end. Saint Paul has a good word concerning this, the which is . . . '

'I will not temporise,' cried Henry sharply, striking the stone coping in front of him with his hand. 'I am unwilling to believe that it is only I among history's princes who has had so good a dream, but I alone of them will be found no temporiser with the forces of self-seeking because, in the Devil's name, it is expedient ! That way has ever come the failure of the world's ideals, and if mine are to fail, it shall not be by taking a half-measure.'

'That is sure,' said the confessor quietly.

'I thank you, father,' replied Henry. 'But I have found you always a man to bring peace to me.'

'The peace everlasting,' murmured Father Bernardino in a voice that seemed merely part and parcel of his profession, nothing more.

'It is all so evil, so unbelievably against the purposes of life itself, this warring and national enmity,' Henry went on.

'Nature is full of strife,' replied the confessor, 'and men are but a part of Nature. Would you ask the wolf to have the manners of the dog?'

'I would certainly not ask the dog to have the manners of the wolf!' riposted Henry, almost angrily, and his squint became from that moment more and more noticeable. 'Man is not meant,' he continued, 'to add to the strife of Nature, but to dominate it and bring it under the power of beauty. That is his function in this life—as it is mine to open the path for future generations to enter more easily into that true way.'

He had spoken exaltedly, and broke from his mood with a sudden self-consciousness, and coughed, and turned again to the contemplation of the landscape.

Far away, on the dusty, winding road from Pisa—so far away as to be only a moving black speck—came a horseman, galloping.

'Take off the ban from the King of Naples,' whispered Father Bernardino. 'The Holy Father will give it a paternal recognition, and hand in hand . . .'

'There can be no hand in hand with Clement along *my* road,' cried Henry sadly. 'He has shown it only too plainly. Be his catspaw—be *their* catspaw, as they one and all expected—no, no! The matter has gone too far for such a treason on my part. I will never be found traitor to my ideal, my

dream. I will at least leave to my successor an opened gate into that League of the Peoples which alone can be the bulwark against temporal misery and the ambitions of princes and the intoxication of power. The world will come to know it, or I have no vision and am no servant of God.'

'Then you will *not* lift the ban off Robert of Naples?' asked the confessor softly.

'No,' answered the Emperor. 'Never! I will die first! He is a son of war and dissension. He must be made peaceable.'

'Sire,' Father Bernardino murmured after a slight pause, 'this touches me. I will dare the wrath of the Holy Father. If you will come down into the church below, I will give thee, my son, that sacrament for which thou cravest. Come . . .'

'Father . . . good father . . .' cried Henry, and his face was suddenly lit as by an ecstasy. 'Oh, I have been desperate, but you bring me the one, unparalleled comfort! Let us go down at once!'

With the last glance which he gave to the shimmering landscape he saw a party of men-at-arms, with a man, evidently a marauder whom they had caught, bound in their midst, making for the nearest tall tree. Henry's first act on descending was to despatch an esquire with a command for the poor wretch's release.

'It is not *his* fault,' he muttered, 'but that of the times—and the times, by God's favour, we are about to amend!'

In the church were a number of the Emperor's knights and attendants, either at the doors in low-toned speech or paying their devotions, for he surrounded himself only with men of a certain piety. In a few, quick, excited words he explained the occasion, breaking off to praise with much warmth the spiritual courage of Father Bernardino in disregarding the fiat of excommunication.

Then he went swiftly to the altar, and knelt in prayer.

The confessor, who had retired into the sacristy, came out presently in his vestments, followed by the priest of the church to act as his assistant. Between them they bore the sacred vessels necessary. They made their passage through a small, kneeling congregation, even the gossipers at the doors having entered and joined devoutly with their fellows within.

But as Father Bernardino passed through, he turned and spoke to the village priest at his heels in a voice audible to all around :

‘I am concerned for him. His health is not what it should be. The strain upon him . . . and he has bravely hidden the fever that he has . . . but still . . .’

And they passed on to the altar.

The brief service began. The bread was consecrated and administered ; the wine was consecrated, a priestly sleeve passing over the cup, then it, too, was administered.

The Emperor drank.

Suddenly he swayed where he knelt, gasping, catching at his throat, coughing, retching ; then, in an effort to rise to his feet, he fell back with a desperate cry, contortedly, and was dead.

X.

Waleran had ridden all through the hot, marvellous summer night, and it was a lathered horse which he reined in at the church door, only to see the body of the Emperor being reverently borne out by two of his esquires. They would carry it into the brilliantly bannered, imperial tent in the middle of the camp, there to lie in state until further order should be known.

Aghast, cursing himself and his mischances, he made question of one whom he recognised among the Emperor's attendants, a native of Brabant as he was himself. A flurry of awed, breathless sentences related everything—but he knew, in truth, more than was told him, more than he would dare ever tell. For who would believe the accusation of a man of his insignificance, lately, too, in disguise and all too probably, therefore, a spy, against so respected a personage as the Emperor's own confessor, a learned and pious priest, one, moreover, in favour, as was well known, with the Holy Father?

But, raging inwardly, he was beside himself, and when the Brabançon's hurried story broke off at the appearance in the church porch of Father Bernardino himself and one of the Emperor's chief knights he strode forward and confronted the confessor, eye to eye.

'Who is this man?' asked the knight, curiously.

It was only the Archbishop-Elector's badge on his attire, Waleran knew, which saved him from Father Bernardino's denunciation.

'You stabbed the wrong messenger!' he blurted out, indifferent as to who heard, and, as the priest's eyes narrowed, he bitterly added: 'And the true messenger has come too late! God help the world!'

He swung on his heel and mounted his horse. Would the confessor let him go? He urged the tired beast to a walking pace, no more. The confessor made no sign, the knight followed his going with an incomprehension which found utterance in a single word:

'Mad!'

'Poor wretch!' commented Father Bernardino, placidly and paternally.

ON PARTING WITH AN OLD PIANO.

*Fifty years of my life
Have just gone out of the house :
And I had not reckoned with the pang,
The long, simultaneous procession of memories.*

*Those first early days,
When I wrestled with the meaning of crotchets,
Quavers, semi-quavers
And (oh, enchantment even then of a mere word !)
Demi-semi-quavers.*

*Then the triumph of exercise-book 'pieces' :
'Blue Bells of Scotland,' 'Keel Row,' 'Mistletoe Bough.'
After that, school and real 'pieces' ;*

*Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven :
And the knowledge of being considered 'good at music'
(Although that was always uncomfortably ousted
By the far deeper knowledge that it was not 'goodness' at all,
But only a disgusting slickness.)*

*Then finishing school,
Giddy heights of popularity,
Brilliance, at concerts,
Of soaring voice as well as of twinkling fingers.
After that, gradual descent year by year
Into scamped practice, mediocrity of performance,
Dulling of bird notes :
And at last, under increasing pressure of existence,
Neglect and (except on the part of the piano-tuner)
Silence.*

So now,
Needing the piano's room more than its company,
I have made a complacent virtue of necessity
And given it to an old friend—
A friend who instantly knew and understood,
Who received the fifty years of my life
And spared a sigh, a smile, a tear over them,
Before trying her new piano.

V. H. FRIEDLAENDER

REMEMBERING AN ENGLISH GRANDFATHER.

I.

The hedgerows burned with colouring as old
As English autumn, and as manifold—
Village and spinney, down and common lay
At one with nature's peacefulness—that day
You bartered Berkshire for uncertainty
Of young Virginia, far beyond the sea.

II.

Below the lichened belfry, where I stand,
Three hundred years have scarcely touched the land
That held your heart's devotion till you died,
A land your memory always glorified.
As then, the line of elms where April rook
Challenged the tenantry of squirrel; the brook
Spanned by a bridge as ancient as this tower,
Blend with the landscape, as a leaf with flower.

*The village, thatched of roof; the fields, hedge-fenced,
Merge also, into beauty keenly sensed,
A mystic, man-carved loveliness. These bells
Reverberate in spring to citadels
Of hare and pheasant; coverts where the fox
Finds refuge for his earth among brown rocks
And bracken; or the wheatear, flying lowly,
Rivals the blackbird in her song. Now slowly,
A flock and shepherd wind across the hill;
The afternoon grows drowsier, and still.*

III.

*O grandsire, mingled with the Jamestown earth,
Was any conquest or dominion worth
The cost? Or did the destiny that made
You leave this England, keep you unafraid
The while you faced a wilderness and hewed
From it a commonwealth? With fortitude
You served Virginia loyally and rest,
'By hope of a joyful resurrection,' blessed;
Yet in your dreaming, if the dead desire,
Do you not yearn for your ancestral shire?*

LOUISE CRENSHAW RAY.

Alabama, U.S.A.

MAGIC AND MEDICINE IN MEXICO.

BY RODNEY GALLOP.

A FAMILIAR feature in the market of every village of Indian Mexico is the *curandero* or herb-doctor, who crouches over a straw mat on which in neat little heaps are spread out a variety of ill-assorted objects, ranging from desiccated flowers, leaves and roots to woodpeckers' heads and armadillo shells. This curious array is the outward sign of an extensive practice of folk-medicine, the great bulk of which goes back to pre-Conquest days. Faith in the *curandero* is such that people will often prefer him to the doctor, even where one is available, and there are many more or less well-authenticated stories of his success where medical science has failed.

A striking and rather touching example of this faith reached my ears when King George V lay dying. An old British resident in Mexico City was visited by two Indians who came independently to offer their advice. The first said that a deer should be killed and the warm blood given to the King to drink. The second begged him to send to London by air mail a remedy distilled from seven herbs gathered at the new moon, of which he would not disclose the names.

Folk medicine in Mexico as in most countries is a fascinating blend of superstition and of genuine empirical medicinal lore. Since, moreover, the Indian peasantry have inherited it from the relatively sophisticated civilisations

which preceded the Conquest, the purely superstitious element is present in a lesser degree than in many European countries, such as Portugal.¹

The Spanish Conquistadores were deeply impressed with this lore. Sahagún, Torquemada and other early chroniclers describe the properties of many curative herbs, and in the College of Santa Cruz for the Sons of Indian Gentlemen established in Mexico City by Franciscan Friars within twenty years of the Conquest, the curriculum included the study of Aztec medicine. Sahagún, in particular, mentions certain medicinal stones, in addition to herbs, including one which restores those who, in his words, 'have received a shock from a flash of lightning' or which, mixed with another stone, is a cure for heart disease. The latter stone was supposed, like the thunderbolt, to fall from the clouds during mountain storms and to remain under the earth, gradually growing larger and larger. The sign of its presence is a solitary tuft of *zacate* grass.

The belief in the curative virtues of stones is rare in Mexico to-day, but in the Otomi village of San Bartolo Otolotepec my wife, who made a hobby of gathering Indian medical lore, saw a herb-woman selling what she called *corazón de piedra*, heart of stone, that is to say fragments from the centre of a broken stone, for heart trouble. At Iguala another ordinary-looking stone was on sale for application, together with iron pyrites, to scorpion stings.

Sahagún also takes responsibility for the strange statement that the bones of giants found under the earth, ground up and drunk with chocolate, are a remedy for internal hæmorrhage. These can scarcely be other than the bones of large, prehistoric animals such as the mammoth skeleton which

¹ See *Portugal: A Book of Folk Ways*, by Rodney Gallop, pp. 61 seq.

was dug up some years ago near Peñon and is now in the Natural History Museum in Mexico City.

In 1570 Phillip II of Spain ordered his private physician Francisco Hernández to write the Natural History of New Spain. For this purpose he gave him the high-sounding title of Proto-Médico de las Indias and sent him to Mexico where for five years he travelled about, risking his life, undermining his health and suffering much from lack of support, both financial and moral. By 1577 he had completed his monumental work in sixteen manuscript in-folio tomes, with which he returned to Spain. To superintend the printing of his work he gave up a similar commission in Peru and other parts of the Indies, but to his great grief his manuscript was not printed but stowed away in the Library of the Escorial where in 1671 all but a few leaves were destroyed by fire. Fortunately, a Neapolitan doctor by the name of Recchi had made a summary in Latin of the book, of which a copy fell into the hands of one Francisco Ximénez, a Dominican monk who worked as a physician in the Hospital of Oaxtepec, founded by Cortes within a mile or so of what had been Montezuma's garden of medicinal herbs. Ximénez studied the manuscript, tried the remedies on his patients and finally translated it into Spanish with his own notes, in which form it was published in Mexico in 1615, with the title *Cuatro Libros de la Naturaleza*. This book, though no doubt only a shadow of the original work, is of the greatest interest.

The Hospital of Oaxtepec produced another fervent Spanish student of Aztec medicinal lore, the 'Servant of God,' Gregorio López, whose *Tesoro de Medicinas* was published in 1674. Space precludes the mention of more than one or two of the more curious of his prescriptions. For asthma he recommends the lung of a fox powdered in wine or

lizards toasted with their heads and tails cut off; for eye troubles the ashes of a snail mixed with honey; and for broken ribs, goats' dung in wine applied to the injured part. As a cure for alcoholism his suggestions are powdered pumice stone, eels, horse's sweat, the blood of bedbugs or burnt and powdered swallows, all to be dissolved in wine and taken internally.

It is obvious that such cures are not entirely innocent of superstitious notions, and sympathetic magic plays its part in many of them, as in cures of the 'hair-of-the-dog-that-bit-you' type. Gregorio López, for instance, advises his patients not to use the hair but to drink the blood of the dog which bit them, and to apply to a scorpion sting the dead body of the scorpion. We have even heard at Tepoztlán at the present time of the offending scorpion being immediately eaten alive with this same object. An even more curious case reached our ears from Guatemala, between which and Mexico the Maya Indians form a connecting link. One of two quarrelling women bit the other's arm which swelled up but was cured by extracting the tooth of the biter and tying it to the place.

Not long ago we were fortunate enough to visit an Otomi witch-doctor in his mountain home of San Pablito in the Sierra de Puebla where not more than three or four Indians speak the Spanish tongue. This village has a great reputation in all the surrounding country for magic, both black and white. In particular it has preserved the pre-Conquest manufacture of bark-paper which is used for ceremonial purposes only. From it our friend the *brujo* was cutting little human figures about six inches long. These figures are used not only in all sorts of pagan agricultural fertility rites but also for folk medicines. Illness is conceived as an evil spirit which has entered into the body of the sufferer. The

witch-doctor coaxes it out with incantations into a figure of the dark-coloured paper used for black magic, which he immediately burns and replaces with another made of the light-coloured paper used for white magic. This completes the cure.

Faith in the virtues of sympathetic magic is also responsible for the strange complex of beliefs and practices known as *nagualism* which presupposes an intimate connection between every human being and a certain animal. If that animal suffers, so the man will suffer by an invisible current of sympathetic magic. Round Misantla the Totonacs determine a new-born child's *nagual* by strewing the ground round the cottage with ashes in the evening. Next morning the ashes are examined for animal-tracks, those nearest the child's resting-place being those of his *nagual*. When a person is ill the Totonacs are certain that his spirit is caught in the mountains and is about to be reincarnated in some animal. They hunt for this animal and the first to find it, be it squirrel, badger or armadillo, catches it alive and tends it carefully until the sick person recovers.

Among the Popolac Indians on the borders of Puebla and Oaxaca it is the witch-doctor himself who sets out in search of that animal which he considers has carried off some part of his patient's soul. When he catches it he hands it over to the patient and then drums on some hollow object, shouting and bellowing his adjurations to the soul to return, in the chorus of which all those present join.

Auto-suggestion may account for cures effected even by such unscientific means as these, as they do no doubt for many of the miraculous cures attributed to local cults of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints, or to *soi-disant* 'illuminated' persons like the extraordinary figure known as *El Niño Fidencio* who ten years ago attracted people of all classes

from all over Mexico to his remote village in the North.

On one occasion we accompanied the huge stream of Indian pilgrims who proceed on the first Friday in Lent to the greatly venerated shrine of Chalma in the south-west of the State of Mexico. On our return, an old woman who was trudging along beside us told us that she had suffered agonies of toothache which nothing would alleviate. She had spent as much as three pesos at the dentist's, but all in vain. Then she had gone in pilgrimage to Chalma where she had bought one of the small fragments of earth from the sacred cave which are sold to the pilgrims. This she had applied to her tooth which was miraculously cured. 'Did the pain never return?' we asked. 'No,' she replied, 'you see, as soon as I put the earth on it the tooth fell out.'

It is unjust, if a little tempting, to lay undue emphasis on the cures in which ignorance and credulity combine to produce picturesque results. Most folk-medicine in Mexico, as already mentioned, is on a higher level, and there are many instances in which it has forestalled modern scientific discoveries. In applying the kidneys of cattle or toad-skins to staunch bleeding wounds the Indians have only been anticipating by a few centuries the discovery of adrenalin. Sea-urchin and other shells and fragments of dried crab sold in the market at Patzcuaro to be powdered and drunk in wine for the blood derive their virtue from the small quantities of iodine which they contain. Through this or some other property a medicine derived from mother of pearl is of undoubted efficacy in removing scars, including even smallpox pits. The curative compounds found in many medicinal herbs are often difficult to isolate, but science usually confirms their virtues when this can be done, as for instance in the *flor de manita*, better known as digitalis.

Where the conception of disease is false, however, it is useless to expect sound notions of curing it. Some of the Mayas, for instance, conceive measles as a little child, and put toys and food outside their doors so that he may stop and play with them and thus be deterred from entering the house. They attempt to combat smallpox by placing gourds full of ground maize on the eaves of their huts with the idea that the disease will partake of it and depart satisfied. Should one of them contract it, however, he will actually take scabs from himself and prick them into other members of the household, thus in effect spreading the disease. Frederick Starr, who reports this practice, is puzzled as to its motive, but it seems clearly to be inspired by the ancient notion that one can be rid of a disease by transferring it to another person or object.

A Mexican friend was told by an Otomi Indian, when suffering from an inflamed eye, that he must rub it with a sprig of rue or of the pepper-tree, which he must then throw backwards over his shoulder without looking at it. If he looked backwards the affection would follow him. Here the affection is clearly conceived as being transferred to the sprig.

When we first bought guinea-pigs for our children in Mexico City, our washerwoman showed interest and approval. We had of course bought them to keep illness away from the house she said. This new use for guinea-pigs was puzzling, and we explained that they were intended only as pets. She maintained, however, that where guinea-pigs were kept people did not fall ill. This belief puzzled us until we learned that in Peru, if not in Mexico, guinea-pigs play a considerable part in folk-medicine. Thus, in the High Andes, if an Indian feels pain the spot is rubbed with a live guinea-pig with the idea that the evil shall pass

into the animal. The latter is then skinned and examined by the witch-doctor, and the patient's complaint is diagnosed from the condition of its muscles and heart.

Apart from the malign effects attributed to witchcraft, the most varied symptoms tend to be grouped under a few headings such as *inflamación* (stomach trouble), *el aire* ('the air,' generally a chill), *el dolor* ('the pain'), *ansias* (worry), *empache* (distension or swelling) and that distressingly common complaint the *derrame de bilis* or 'flow of bile' brought on by anger or agitation. For this last we have noted an immense range of remedies, only two of which can be recorded here. Out in the country we once met an Indian carrying the white roots of the *contrahierba* plant strung like a chain of great white beads bandoleerwise round his shoulders. These he was taking to sell in the market as a sovereign cure for the *bilis*. Another curious remedy is to drink on an empty stomach a tea made from the *cempoalxochitl*, Aztec flower of the dead, holding a copper coin in it.

The vast majority of remedies, of course, are herbal, although a catalogue of them with their properties, real or supposed, could only be wearisome. One plant may be used for many different cures. For instance, the flowering shrub called *cabellito de angel* or angel's hair, from the silky red strands of its flower, was known to the Aztecs as a cure for eye troubles, even including cataract. Within the last half century it was looked upon by members of the medical profession as a remedy for malaria, but we have more often heard it recommended as a heart stimulant, for which purpose it is sold in Malinalco to the pilgrims nearing Chalma, who may well require it after their exhausting journeys on foot up hill and down dale for several days.

To many uses, both good and bad, are put the group of

plants known collectively as *toloache* and all containing the active principle of belladonna. Among them is the beautiful trumpet-flower of the scented *floripundio*. Taken in large doses *toloache* is, of course, not only a potent drug but a deadly poison, and certain parts of it, chiefly the seeds, affect the nervous system and may cause a form of madness. In Northern Mexico the Indians of the Sierra Madre produce a kind of intoxication by chewing the leaves or making an infusion of them and mixing them with *mescal* spirit. The Yaqui women sometimes take the cooked leaves to diminish the pains of childbirth. The leaves, prepared with those of *salvia* and *digitalis*, are also made into anti-asthmatic cigarettes, while the seeds mixed with alcohol make a good friction for rheumatic pains.

Many even stranger objects figure in the Mexican pharmacopoeia. The *curandero's* store often offers fragments of armadillo shell which are ground up and given to children with the whooping-cough. At Xoxocotla we saw a little girl suffering from this complaint with an armadillo's head hung round her neck. Francisco Jiménez mentions that the penultimate bone in the armadillo's tail ground up with oil and made into pills is a good remedy for deafness. In his own case, however, the remedy was not efficacious, which he ascribed to the fact that his deafness came from a 'cold' and not a 'hot' cause. The terms 'hot' and 'cold' have curious applications in this connection. Certain fruits, such as melon, mango and guava are regarded as 'hot,' and others such as paw-paw, orange and water-melon as 'cold', possibly depending on whether they are heating or cooling to the blood.

In the market at Oaxaca we found tortoiseshell being sold as a cure for ulcers on the fingers, and a green wood-pecker together with sea-urchin spines and seaweed for

heart trouble and the ever-present *el aire*. At El Arenal near Actopan in Otomi country the specific for this last complaint was *comajén*, earth honeycombed by some insect and gathered at the foot of the near-by hills.

Folk-medicine affects its strangest forms in its attempts to cure what is virtually incurable. There are several so-called remedies for rabies, for instance, including the juice of the maguey aloe and the flesh of the zopilote buzzard. The strangest is one of which we heard from a man who was riding through the hot country of Vera Cruz. In a tiny hamlet he found a group of muleteers, one of whom was in an advanced stage of hydrophobia. He had been tied to a tree by his companions and had become so violent that no one could approach him. On his return journey a few days later our informant met the same group and was surprised to see the victim sitting with the other muleteers, pale and haggard, but eating and behaving quite naturally. It appeared that while tied to the tree he had been stung by seven scorpions and as a result the evil had gone out of him. The scorpions, it was, had died.

One evening we were walking up the mountain trail behind Taxco when we overheard a curious conversation between an elderly man and a middle-aged woman trudging their way home from market. The woman was complaining of her incurable ill-health and the man was trying to persuade her to consult the Health Delegate at Taxco. For thirty-nine years, he said, he had suffered from an illness which from his description sounded like the after-effects of rheumatic fever. He had always regarded it as *el aire*, for on that day in his youth when he had been stricken down he had been over-heated and he had thought that the chill air had entered into his blood. He had not been superstitious, he said, like those Indians who conceived *el*

aire as a malignant being and tried to placate it with offerings of food left in caves and at the foot of high cliffs. But he had known no better than to believe that *el aire* could be transferred from father to child and that if the children left home they took it away from their parents with them. Yet all those who claimed to have knowledge of cures had been unable to help him. Then, a year or two ago, he had approached the Health Delegate. The latter had cleared up his misconceptions and had given him injections at their bare cost which had made him well again.

The incident is typical of what is happening all over Mexico. Gradually, and in the face of countless obstacles, the light of pure science is conquering superstition, ignorance and dim or partial knowledge. Eventually, be the time short or long, this traditional lore will be superseded by rational medicine to the great benefit of the peasant community. Yet this traditional lore has a contribution to make to medical science, if it is studied before it is too late by those with the requisite botanical and medical knowledge. Countless medicinal herbs have yet to yield to the analyst the organic substances from which they derive their efficacy, and once isolated these substances may yield remedies still unknown to civilisation.

SEAL ISLAND.

BY LAWRENCE G. GREEN.

FOR years I had sailed past Seal Island without ever setting foot on the rocky, guano-whitened slopes. 'It is surrounded by sunken rocks on which the sea usually breaks,' warns the *Africa Pilot*; but I had often steered my small sloop close enough to watch the sun-bathing colony of seals littering the northern point.

At last I was invited to explore this little-known islet, a place few people, apart from naval seamen, fishermen and the guano gangs, have ever seen save as a white streak etched against the blue surface of False Bay. Though the island lies within sight of South Africa's naval base at Simonstown, it is inaccessible except in the finest weather, and therefore remote.

The contract for gathering the guano harvest is held by Miss Sophia Fernandez of Kalk Bay. Seal Island is one of many little bird isles owned by the Union Government. Nearly all the others are worked by the Guano Islands Department; but it is more convenient to allow this lone rock to be cleared by private contract. Old Pedro Fernandez held the contract for many years. When he died five years ago, his daughter, Sophia, already experienced in the queer trade, took over the management. It is a masculine enterprise, yet she handles every detail with real knowledge.

Her brothers, of course, carry out the difficult routine of landing the expedition on Seal Island every summer, supervising the work on shore, keeping the men supplied with

food and water, and loading the sacks of guano. But Miss Fernandez visits the island, purchases the stores, controls the whole business side of the affair. She was there on the day of my visit, fishing with the men of the motor-cutter *Simon*, checking equipment, satisfying herself that nothing had been forgotten. 'Just think what would happen if the men on the island found I had not packed the matches !' she pointed out.

There are now four Fernandez brothers, and I met two of them on the day when I accompanied the family expedition to the island. Thomas, the eldest, is skipper of the *Simon*, a splendid seaman and an expert in handling boats along the dangerous shores of Seal Island. A younger brother, Cyril, takes charge of the party of seven men on the island, becoming a willing exile for a month every year. The others, Sydney and Gabriel, are skippers of Fernandez family boats on the coast. Three more brothers were lost on one disastrous day in 1922, when the fishing boat *Columbia* capsized in heavy weather in False Bay. A boat named in memory of them, the *Three Brothers*, was wrecked on Seal Island some years afterwards.

Several of the Fernandez boats carry a row of black-painted ports like old-time men-o'-war. The *Simon* is the fastest cutter on False Bay, and she can load 15 tons of guano. When she is not plying between Kalk Bay and Seal Island she steers as far north as Luderitzbucht for the crawfishing, or loiters off Cape Point after snoek.

The sea is the Fernandez family tradition. About a century ago a number of sailormen, including the first Fernandez, deserted from a Spanish ship and settled at the Cape. Their descendants still form the backbone of the Kalk Bay fishing fleet. Though the Spanish language is no longer spoken among them they are still Roman Catholics, and the Spanish type of countenance may be clearly traced.

You must visualise Seal Island to understand the hardships and difficulties of the Fernandez enterprise. It lies about seven miles from Kalk Bay harbour—just a rock, as I have said, without one patch of sandy beach. The area is about one acre, and the highest point about 50 feet above the surf. It is waterless, completely barren. Only the seals, the duikers, penguins and pelicans are really at home there; though the labourers who sign on for the work year after year are happy to find themselves on the desolate rock again, with regular meals for a month assured. As I stood on Seal Island in the evening I thought of the strong contrast between this primitive adventure and the lighted pleasure resorts of the False Bay coast only a few miles away.

It was all summed up, accurately enough, on my official permit: 'The Government accepts no responsibility whatever for any accident which may happen to, or any loss which may be incurred by, the holder of this permit either in landing or on embarkation from the island.'

The *Simon* lay rolling at anchor off the landing-place an hour after leaving harbour. Skipper Thomas Fernandez had brought her close in, for the day was as calm as could be expected. Men and stores were transferred to an open boat in tow, and cautiously we approached the sea-swept rock which gives doubtful access to the safety of the island.

'It is just a matter of watching the sea and counting the waves,' young Cyril Fernandez told me. 'One man will jump on shore with a line and make it fast to a ring-bolt in the rock. We have a stern-line fast to the cutter. Wait for slack water, then take your chance. Now!'

I jumped, and clambered on to Seal Island with wet feet. And I imagined the conditions on a day of heavy weather. Such a day as that on which Cyril Fernandez found himself sinking in a smashed boat, and was flung on to the island

by a great wave with hardly a scratch. Or another day, when another boat was lost, and he swam for his life surrounded by seals. 'They played with me like kittens with a ball of wool,' he recalled. 'I thought I was finished, but not one seal bit me.'

I watched the precious fresh water floated ashore in barrels, hauled up and rolled to the hut, emptied into iron drums. Then came the stores, passed from hand to hand. No picnic party this, but the grim essentials of life on a rock—coal for the 'galley,' wood and candles, flour, rice, fish oil, sacks of onions and potatoes, salt and salt fish, tinned meat, tea, coffee and paraffin stoves, a drum of oil, fish-hooks and lines, simple medicines, the tobacco rations. One or two packages may be dropped in the sea, but never the tobacco. No alcohol is allowed on the island.

'Here is another important item—insect powder,' Miss Fernandez showed me. 'The birds have been occupying the stone hut where the men will live, and they are not good tenants. To-night the men will have to sleep under canvas. Then they will clear out the hut, whitewash it, and use the insect powder. Otherwise Seal Island is a most healthy place.'

Hard work, I think, keeps the exiles healthy. They started soon after landing, a line of men on their knees with scrapers, brooms and shovels, literally scratching the valuable guano from this acre of rock. Miss Fernandez receives payment from the Government for each ton of guano delivered. The men are paid by results; they work cheerfully by daylight and with lamps in the dark to clear the rock so that each man may return with about £7 saved. One grey-headed labourer, John McLaghlán, has not missed a season for twenty years. Seal Island, comfortless though it may seem, gives them greater security than they can find on the

mainland. I saw a labourer with one arm in the gang. 'The best worker of the lot,' Cyril Fernandez told me.

Wind and rain are the enemies of the men on Seal Island. A high wind blows the loose, powdery guano away. Rain damages the guano in sacks if left uncovered, and washes the untouched deposits into the sea.

The occupation of the island must be carefully timed with an eye on the weather. But the habits of the birds are the most important factor. Most of the guano is left by the migrating 'trek duikers'—those unlovely black hordes of cormorants you see flying like squadrons of bombers, in marvellous formation, low over the sea. Shy birds on shore, they nest on the outer rocks and lay their long, chalky eggs. They hasten screeching from the invader. Two or three months after the capricious duikers have arrived, the clearing season on Seal Island begins.

The lordly penguins are there at all times, seizing the best positions, scorning the exposed places where the duikers breed. Nevertheless, the penguins of Seal Island are poorly housed in comparison with the inhabitants of other penguin resorts. A penguin likes to hollow out a burrow with tireless feet and live underground. On the hard granite of Seal Island this is impossible, so the penguins cower and cringe behind rocks, in crevices, beneath boulders. If you walk among them they hide their heads ludicrously, or huddle their chicks together and hiss defiance. Spend an afternoon with the penguins and you realise why a great Antarctic explorer called them 'the comedians of the South.'

Dozens of pelicans use Seal Island as their breeding ground. They were away fishing in the *vleis* of the Cape Flats when I called. Cyril Fernandez has studied this interesting group closely. 'They destroy the young duikers and penguins and eat the eggs,' he said. 'These pelicans seem to prefer

fresh-water fish, but bring all sorts of queer food over here from the mainland. If you find a dead snake, a rat or a chicken you may be sure it has been dropped by a pelican.'

The sacred ibis, too, prowls among the young birds, and fully deserves its criminal reputation. This sinister bird flies all the way from Egypt to plunge its long beak into tasty fledglings.

False Bay is the greatest line-fishing area in South African waters. One school of thought believes the bird sanctuary on Seal Island should be destroyed to improve the fishing. It is a difficult problem, and one which applies to the whole coastline. Which are worth more to the country—the guano-producing birds or the fish? Naturalists have calculated that the birds destroy twenty thousand tons of fish a day. The yield of guano from all the islands in a good year is about ten thousand tons. Those interested in the fishing industry would drive the birds away from the roosts they have occupied for centuries, and turn the fish into fish-meal—a food for cattle and poultry. The controversy fills the correspondence columns of the newspapers from time to time; but no solution has been found. The Government, however, believes literally that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and there is little likelihood of a change. Guano is rich in nitrogen and phosphates—the most satisfactory fertiliser of all for wheat crops.

Finally, there are the seals. I walked to within twenty yards of them before an old warrior raised the alarm and the whole herd lumbered away slowly, with whiskers turned angrily in my direction, until they slipped into the sea. Once afloat, they formed an inquisitive semicircle, faced the rock where I stood gazing down on them, and stared back boldly. These seals, too, have often been blamed for the fact that hauls of fish in False Bay are not what they were

'in the old days.' Seven years ago a party of seasick riflemen were authorised to thin out the herd. They made poor shooting from their motor-boats, and the seals remained on the island. Since then the seals have seldom been disturbed. The demand for sealskins has been poor in recent years. But there will be slaughter on a large scale if the market improves—South African skins fetch as much as forty-eight shillings apiece in London when fashion favours the seal. The waters round Seal Island will be streaked with red, and I shall stay away.

Seals have poor eyesight, but if the hunters approach them down-wind they pick up the scent a mile away. 'Once you frighten a herd, they grow cunning,' an old hand told me. 'You'll be lucky to get within clubbing distance of them. You have to wait days for a chance—a calm sea and the wind right. Then you may kill a thousand in a morning. I've seen it.'

Years ago the docile, silky seals waited innocently to be butchered. Now they have grown restless. They post sentinels to warn them of the coming of the raiders. A female seal, cornered with its young, will turn and fight. And if a man shows cowardice, the female will follow him with dangerous jaws snapping viciously.

The raiders make a determined rush as the seals lie sunning themselves on the flat rocks. Rifles cannot be used as the bullets would damage the valuable skins. So the hunters club right and left mercilessly, with never a pause until their victims are dead and the survivors have found safety in the sea.

Great care is taken in removing the pelts, for a slip of the knife means a ruined skin. The whaleboat is loaded with pelts; and as the boat, dripping blood, rows back to the ship, sharks follow eagerly in the hope of snatching the

skins. Once on board, the skins are salted and stowed away in barrels. A man may earn £400 at sealing in the short season of four months, but he lives dangerously.

Sealing is a government monopoly in South African waters. But, owing to fogs and the remoteness of the islands, there are wonderful chances for poachers. Outside the three-mile limit, of course, seals may be taken by anyone, so that the poachers always have a ready explanation of their valuable freight.

Some poachers use large mesh nets, others dynamite. The raiders fix a charge of dynamite on a buoy and allow it to drift down on a herd of seals. A desperate trade indeed, and one which has not changed much since Kipling wrote his 'Rhyme of the Three Sealers.'

I found traces of the Royal Navy on the northern end of the island. There is the stout white flagstaff, a seamanlike job, from which a distress signal may be flown by the marooned men. Seamen visit Seal Island once a year to paint the flagstaff. Among the rocks were fragments of old shells, relics of the days when Seal Island was a target for the ships of the Africa Squadron. Birds and seals must have short memories. Great care is taken nowadays to avoid frightening the revenue-producing birds from the islands. But it seems that precautions are hardly necessary when a naval bombardment fails to disperse a bird population. (Up the coast at Lambert Bay recently I observed another example of the tenacity with which the birds cling to an island home. The malagas hordes on Penguin Islet remained undisturbed while all the machinery of a modern harbour-construction plant was at work in their midst. They made way for the cranes and cement blocks, but they did not abandon the island.)

While I wandered and climbed about the weird, teeming rock, the men had brought the stores up the steep slope to

the hut. Beside this one-roomed building, on a flat rock face, bygone gangs of labourers had painted their names and the dates of their occupation. I suppose they felt the need of some little monument after their toil and loneliness.

Cyril Fernandez seemed a trifle wistful as the time for parting drew near. 'Still, we shall be comfortable enough this time,' he said. 'A few years ago there were no huts—only tents. Even in summer the nights on the island are cold. We sleep on the empty guano sacks, and keep a fire going. Wood and water are always left on the island for castaways. During a gale the sea sweeps up almost to the doorway of the hut. New hands are terrified—they think the island will be swamped.'

I asked about the fresh-water supply.

'We never run short,' he declared. 'Casks can always be floated ashore, even when it is impossible to land on the island. There is the flag signal by day for emergencies, and a fire on the highest point of the rock would be noticed at night. Of course, we are careful. Fish and potatoes are cooked in sea water, and taste better that way. Four casks of fresh water, each holding fifty gallons, last a week. We can catch all the fish we want. Sometimes we eat penguin and duiker eggs. The cutter comes once a week with fresh bread and water. As for amusements, we hardly need any. Sleep is the best hobby after a long day's work collecting part of the season's crop of from thirty to eighty tons of guano. A guitar and a pack of cards fill the gaps. There is no excitement. Years ago, in my father's time, a labourer went mad, walked into the sea and was drowned. More recently a couple of men became bored and left the island unknown to the rest of the gang. They floated off on empty water-barrels and were washed up safely on a beach miles away.'

It was a remarkable escapade in view of the distance, the method chosen, and the man-eating sharks that cruise round Seal Island.

Seal Island must have been explored in Dutch East India Company's days, but the early records do not mention it. I have seen a Customs notice of 1845 offering guano and shells for sale on Seal Island. No doubt the shells would have been used for lime burning, as they are to-day. About a century ago there was a landing-stage on the island to make the shipment of guano easier. It is obvious that the trade now carried on by the Fernandez family was flourishing long ago. At one time walls were built round part of the island to prevent the guano from washing into the sea. The walls, like the landing-stage, have vanished.

But the Seal Island labour goes on in spite of the anger of the sea. The men work within sight of the brilliant lights along the waterfront, the Robinson Crusoes of False Bay. I do not suppose there are many inhabited islands in the world smaller than this inaccessible rock where Cyril Fernandez rules, and his sister Sophia plans the enterprise year after year.

Cape Town, South Africa.

THE KISS.

BY ELEANOR SALTZMAN.

BUT I've known Edith Boyd all my life, David's startled heart-beats told him. Crouching there by the hotbed, he shifted his weight to the other tensed foot and carved another tomato plant from the earth. He dared not look up again, lest he see the naked look of adoration he had surprised on the other's face. Something boyish and awkward raced through his fingers and throat, so that he dropped the trowel clumsily. Just so she stood behind him, her eyes loving the very sight of him crouching beside her hotbed. And the curve of her unconscious, waiting lips kept him bowed there humbly. He thought with something like surprise that she was almost beautiful, all the clean-cut strength of her face softened into yielding at his very presence here. If men could see her so, he knew, they would never let her live here, a spinster, isolated within her own cool self-sufficiency. And then, with a rush, he realised that what kept her aloof was perhaps this bond she felt towards him, welded in their early school-days when they had gone along the road together with their books and lunch.

David Graham got to his feet slowly and laid the trowel on top of a fence-post. 'That will be more than a plenty, Edith,' he said gravely without looking at her. He wondered if she knew he had seen. The cool mask was down once more. 'Lucy'll be tickled to death to get these. Her tomatoes haven't done any good, some way.'

'Take some more.' Edith counted the bouquet of

tomato plants in her hands, the moist earth staining her finger-tips. 'I've got all I need, and several dozen extra. I've sold all I'm going to. Here——'

'No,' David said, and he couldn't keep the sound of gentle gravity out of his voice. 'She don't have a place big enough for more. But we're sure glad to get these. I'm crazy about tomatoes, and when all ours died——'

'That's what I told Lucy,' Edith said and turned away to the steps. 'I knew you liked tomatoes, and so many people haven't had much luck this year.'

You knew I liked tomatoes, David thought, watching her fold the plants in a newspaper. You remembered, and again the strange something raced through him, to his finger-tips. Edith. Why did I never think? He took the folded paper from her earth-darkened fingers, and this time he looked at her, straight, and smiled. Out of the tight cleaving in his throat he smiled to her, and the cool tan mask dissolved, imperceptibly, so that the lips of spinster Edith Boyd were soft and waiting. Beneath the dear blending of their glances meeting, steady, knowing each other, something told him, with the surprise of a man newly aware of a woman, your eyes are grey. Beautifully grey in clear tan face. He took the package from her hands without breaking their eyes' caressing, and his fingers closed, momentarily, over hers. He knew, as a man knows, the woman-quiver of those fingers. And he knew that some long-waiting thing in her was glad because of this moment, broken free from the cool reserve that was her life. He turned away.

'Thank you, Bet,' he said, and he heard his own voice, still a man's to a woman newly beloved. He knew she stood straight and proud, loving the sight of him leaving her, the slight stoop of his shoulders, his untidy black hair. He felt, still, the odd sound of that boyish nickname on his

lips, leaping into the moment's warmth from a distant, half-forgotten childhood, and he wished with sudden passion that he had kissed her. He wanted, achingly, to know the feel of her lips. He swung through the gate, scarcely aware that he had opened it, and walked swiftly down the road lest his feet turn back to the woman standing quietly beside her house watching him go. He dared not think of it, he told himself, frightened a little by the too-strong leaping of his blood to reach this new, desirable Edith.

Edith Boyd, very fabric of his life. So much a part of all these years of living, he had never really seen her. He thought, almost writhing, of his boyish jubilation when he told her of Lucy. She had laughed at his eagerness. Then she had felt so, and had covered her hurt with her laughing. He had been angry, thinking she was making fun of him. I didn't understand, Edith. Why didn't I know?

The earth of the road was still moist from the heavy dew of the night. The thick June shade of the maples lay cool across the way, and the sun reached the beaten earth only here and there, through thinned branches' lacework. The freshness of the morning came deep into David's lungs and quieted the racing of his blood. Edith Boyd loves me, he said over and over to himself, and the strangeness of it ebbed and became a part of the vital essence of the morning. It was a part of the sunlight, clear and dew-touched, that came warm across the early summer green of the pastures. It was a part of the cattle grazing, of the colt that wheeled and raced down the hill towards the windmill and the water. Edith Boyd loves me, and beyond, the new green of the willows in the slough was alive and vital. Later there would be wild grapes there on the old, old vines clinging to the willows' branches.

He smiled once to himself, aware, fleetingly, of the strange

alchemy that works in a man, knowing he is desirable in a woman's eyes. It was powerful in his veins because it came to him as something new, something at once a part of all this, his world, and yet different from it. Not since the early, distant days with Lucy had he felt it. He had known, these dozen years, only the day-after-day quiet of his planting, his breeding, his feeding. He accepted himself as Dave, husband of Lucy and father of Lucette. The watering, the haying with Edith—

He turned again to the thought of Edith Boyd. And with his husbanding and ploughing and fathering, this tall, capable woman was, indeed, a woman and he had never known it. He had a consciousness of the years of which Edith had been a vital, living part of him, ever since his birth here on this farm and, barely two months later, her birth on the farm joining. He had never realised how deeply this was true till now. Their early squabbles over David's mongrel pup. And then the long, long day when they, at six, half frightened, half eager, first had gone to school together. For years they had shared even the old-fashioned double seat at school, and once, on a blistering occasion when he pinched her and she broke her slate over his head, they had both forfeited their recess game of Andy Over, and religiously studied geography, angry shoulders turned against each other.

Back there, somewhere, it had begun. And he wondered why it had made her withdraw all her womanhood behind a wall of assumed indifference to the state of her hair, the lifting of her grey eyes beneath their lashes. He had accepted her so, requiring of her races, accuracy at the bat, and fearless decapitation of spring fries, if need arose. Grandly she had measured up until she was this Edith Boyd. And it was all part and parcel of this essential womanhood

in her that let her lips soften, waiting for his, even now that they were thirty-two and he was husband of Lucy and father of Lucette.

He put one foot in the ladder-rungs of the woven wire fence and leaped over into his clover. Already it was lush and deep, so that his feet were lost within it. He walked along the fence and went back across the acres towards the windmill. He walked erect, his old blue shirt a garment of grace, because a woman loved him. The open scents of new clover, of dew-wet cornfields faintly green against the field beyond, all came into his nostrils alive, and a part of this new vitality Edith Boyd had given him. He walked, a king, across his acres and found the strangeness of a new humility within his kingship. If I had seen her so, he thought, and knew that by the blindness of his senses he had lost a dear, dear thing. Against the quick impulsiveness of Lucy's eagerness he pitted, unconsciously, Edith Boyd's quiet, deep-rooted fineness and saw his life a different thing. And he knew, humbly, that a great part of himself had gone into that fineness. He felt again, like a momentary stricture in his throat, this outgoing towards his Edith as he realised that now he would never know the warmth of her arms, the yielding of herself at the pressure of her lips to his. And he knew it as an injustice, so linked with his own had been Bet's life. No wall should be. They had grown together. Life had cheated them, as they had cheated each other. He set his lips against the morning, striding across his fields towards the windmill. And something boyish in him cried, angrily, as of old, 'Bet, Bet, hey, where you been? Come, help me, Bet.'

Even that Bet was gone. Died in those years when he had found Lucy and had tried to share even that joyous discovery with her. Then Bet had died, laughed to death

by this new Edith. And after his anger cooled and he had seen Edith and Lucy grow, slowly, into dear, treasured friendship, he had grown accustomed to the presence of this tall, capable Edith who made tomato preserves with Lucy and hayed with him. If Bet was gone, David was still there, David to her when all the world had made him Dave.

Even now, in his reluctance, he saw what he had done and what Edith had done, loving the eager child Lucy. He knew the fineness of his Edith by the very token of her dearness to his wife. Loving him, she had still measured up as she had always done. And he knew that they had done a good job in the growing up of his eager little wife Lucy. Edith was like that. He never knew her to fail in what she set her hand to. She had practised till she could outswim him, outrace him, beat him even at arithmetic—

Then why had she, wanting him, concealed it from him so carefully, so successfully that his unconsciousness had gone unchallenged? He climbed another fence and, releasing the lever of the windmill, stood, eyes on the lowered level of the water, moss-green at its depths in the great metal tank. Why had Edith done this thing, letting him go without so much as an effort to claim her own? He watched the water come from the little pipe, hesitantly at first, then with rhythmic pulse-beats. David gathered up again his parcel of tomato plants and went, slowly, up the cowpath along the draw towards the house. And the dew left the grass reluctantly as the sun came, warm and warmer, across his shoulders.

He came to his gate and set it ajar, so that he could go through. He wanted, suddenly, to tell Lucy and ask her why it had turned out like this. Hurrying a little, he crossed the lots and climbed another fence into the chicken yards. Lucy, her small dark head poised to think on it, would

know. He knew Lucy could tell him why Edith loved him and yet treasured Lucy, helping her child into the world, mothering little Lucette, the child of him, David, and another. She would know why Edith had let him go without telling him he loved her in this strange, deep-stirring way. Lucy would know. . . .

But it was Lucette who saw him first and came running, her dark hair tumbled, her dirty little face eager to laugh with him, her fingers reaching to tug at his. 'What did Aunt Edith send?' she demanded. 'Anything for me, Daddy? Anything for me? What's in that package you brought from Aunt Edith's?'

He felt the stirring of his bewilderment like a pain among his thoughts. 'Tomato plants for Mother,' he said gently, past the pain. 'She didn't send you anything, but she said if you'd come down this afternoon and help her find the first strawberries, she'd bring you home by the store and get you an ice-cream cone.'

'A double dip, Daddy? Would it be a double dip?'

'Yes,' he said, and laughed a little, almost like a catch in his voice. If Edith got it, surely it would be a double dip.

'Can I take the plants to Mother?' she asked, eager in her satisfaction even as Lucy was eager. 'Give me the tomato plants for Mother.'

He had a sudden unreasonable jealousy to give the plants to Lucy, from Edith, himself. Then he caught his breath against the thought. 'For Mother, Lucette,' he said, almost formally, and let her run ahead of him into the house. Lucy, too, he thought, and again he felt this strange desire to come to Lucy with the deep hurt of his new love denied. Crazy, his brain told him, but the urge was there, so that his wistful eyes sought her happy ones in their bewilderment at this strange way life had cheated him. 'Edith sent them,' he

said and smiled a little, like a child. 'She wanted to give you more.'

'Edith would,' she said, and, as if unconscious of his wistfulness, unwrapped the parcel quickly, her long brown fingers quick about the paper. He heard her happy words against his thoughts—

'She does so much,' she said in her warm, alive voice, her own black hair tumbled, her dark eyes asparkle. 'And she'd outdo herself on tomato plants. You like tomatoes so well and she'd remember— Here, what's this— Oh, yes, my aster plants she promised. And look how many—'

She turned to him, and he thought, unbearably, of Edith holding the tomato plants like a bouquet. Why didn't Edith tell me she felt that way? he asked Lucy mutely. But she only stood, happy and secure, showing him the aster plants. The dear, alive eagerness of her eyes, the laughter of her lips. Decades of farming and wifing would never still that laughter. Back of her laughing he knew, from of old, that Lucy was wise. She would know why Edith stood by so and let him go . . . Lucy would know. He took an eager step towards her, past Lucette tugging at her mother's dress, to tell her of the strawberries and ice cream. Edith's strawberries, Edith's asters, for his wife and child. But for him, withheld— And he hadn't even kissed her. Lucy would know.

'Yes,' he said, and his own voice sounded odd in his ears. Tomato plants for him. 'Asters and tomatoes. Edith's a great old girl.' He felt a sudden surge towards Lucy, such as he had not known for years. Her lips, too, so different, yet a woman's. The new stirring of his blood reached out toward her, so that he took her, aster plants and all, into his arms. 'Two, three grand girls,' he said,

still in the strangely thickened voice. His lips crushed hers, hungry as a boy's, and the feel of her own, responding, answered, mute, his own mute question. Edith, measuring herself against his careless boyhood, had forgotten how. The woman of Lucy's quick, mute yielding told him Edith had only tried too hard. But it was a lie. This new Bet's lips, only this morning, told him it was a lie. God, how he loved his wife. He let Lucy's lips go, reluctantly, and laid his cheek against her tumbled hair. Swallowing against the deep, deep pain lumped heavily within him, he closed his eyes as if to shut away the dear, soft yielding of those other lips that he could never touch.

Iowa.

SPRING.

*Did Noah, imprisoned in the Ark,
High on that arid mountain peak,
Long for the errant dove to speak?
To tell him of the meadows green,
Of all the new-sprung flowers seen?
After the dark,
The speedwell heavens overhead
Recalled the fields he used to tread
In freedom: (with untrammelled feet
Walking the dewy clover sweet)
Ere shame and grief
Darkened the only world he knew.
O pledge of living joy when flew
Home to that doubting heart the dove—
Bearing a sign of deathless Love—
The first green leaf.*

MARJORIE KIDD.

A BOX OF LETTERS.

BY CAROLINE M. DUNCAN-JONES.

It is a fascinating occupation, when one has a certain amount of time to spare, to dip into a collection of old family letters ; and from the faded ink and criss-cross writing to form a picture of the little daily doings and the bigger sorrows and joys of a bygone generation. Recently I had occasion to look through a box which contains many hundreds of letters and records of my forbears, the Harnesses, a family of honourable English stock. I found there a mirror of life which, lived less than 150 years ago, had a spaciousness and fragrance, combined with hardships and limitations, of which we have no conception to-day. These letters, simple and ordinary as they are, have a savour and a courtesy that are seldom found in our present hurried telegraphic correspondence.

The study of the manner of life that they depict may well begin with a letter written to his mother in the year 1800 by Sir Alexander Croke, Barrister-at-law, of Studley Priory, a kinsman of the Harness family. One cannot help sympathising with Mrs. Croke who was thus suddenly presented with a grandchild and a daughter-in-law of four years' standing ; but possibly the presentation of the *fait accompli* was preferable to the almost inevitable opposition that must have arisen. The letter at any rate tells a charming and unusual love story.

'Dear Madam,

'With the half note,¹ I have to communicate to you a long

¹ A reference to the custom of cutting a bank-note in half and enclosing each portion in a separate letter as a precaution against robbery.

history, or two, at which perhaps you may be a little surprised. There is an Arabian maxim that every man should dig a well, plant a tree, and make a babe. I should have thought myself very deficient if I had not endeavoured to do my duty accordingly. Last year I dug a new pond at Studley, upon the green, near the Blacksmith's shop. Of trees you know I have planted many, and I have now to inform you that I have not been wanting in respect to the third branch. Can you believe, my dear Mother, that it is now near four years since I entered into the holy state, that I am the father of a fine boy, two years and two months old, and expect a little companion to him in October? Bless me! but who is the lady? Well, you shall hear all about it. You must know then that there was a pretty little girl at Studley, whom I began with admiring as a child; as she grew older my poor heart became infected, in short, it is not much to my credit, but it was something like the story of Pamela and ended in marriage. From that time till now, my Adelaide has been at School, and has received the best education it has been in my power to give her, and I have the satisfaction of finding that she has profited by these opportunities, completely to my expectations, and is now as well to fit as any young ladies of her age. She writes extremely well both for matter and manner, understands French, draws extremely well, and has a little music. But what is more than all she is a girl of an excellent disposition, mild and amiable in her manner, and of good religious principles. In truth, my dear mother, after four years experience, so far from repenting of what perhaps may be thought an imprudence, were it to do again I would not hesitate one moment to take her as my beloved wife, and I have every reason to believe she has a sincere affection for me.—I hope my dear mother will forgive my not making her acquainted with this event before, and had you been in town, I should certainly have made you my first confidant, and should have hoped to have profited by your advice and friendship. But it was such a thing to enter into in a letter, and we had hopes of seeing you long before this so deferred it till we met. . . . I am now bringing my Adelaide out into the world, and have introduced her to a few of my friends, who have been very kind. . . . It is no longer a secret, but we do not tell anybody who she was. So you may tell Mrs. Harness with my love, but let it go no further.

It is evident that Adelaide was able to fill her place in society and was duly accepted by her mother-in-law. The next glimpse of the family is in 1804, when Sir Alexander has been for three years Judge of the Admiralty Court in Nova Scotia.

'Halifax, N.S., May 16th, 1804.

'My dear Madam,' he writes,

'I should have written to you a hundred times before this, but as Adelaide is a constant correspondent I thought you would consider her letters the same as mine, especially as I get a peep at your letters in return, which gives me the opportunity of knowing that my good ancient is well.'

He goes on to express some concern at his mother's tendency towards popery, describes their charming farm and villa in Nova Scotia, named after the Studley at home, and tells of their neighbours. He rejoices that a President from Worcester College, Oxford, has been found for their new university. The children are 'all very fine,' 'perfectly healthy and grow fast.' They all 'send their little loves to Jane, Jemima, and Charles,' their Harness cousins. Mrs. Croke evidently spent much time with her niece, the wife of Colonel William Harness, who lived on a small property at Dronfield near Chesterfield. She appears constantly in the letters of Mrs. Harness and her children as their beloved 'Aunty Croke.'

Commissioner John Harness, the brother of Colonel William, was a famous naval surgeon, discoverer of a cure for scurvy and a friend of Admiral Collingwood, and of Lord Nelson, who was godfather to his daughter Mary. There is good reason to think that it was Dr. Harness who attended Nelson on the occasion when he lost his eye. Here is a letter from Collingwood bearing the news of Nelson's victory and death. It is addressed to Doctor Harness, M.D., Sick & Hurt Board, Somerset Place, London.

'Queen, Gib^r. bay, Nov. 19th, 1805.

'My dear Sir,

'I am sure no one would more sincerely rejoice in our success than you would—it has been great indeed—and we have much reason to be thankful but alas! amidst our joy we have also great cause of lamentation in the death of our excellent friend Lord Nelson—who was killed by a musket ball—and many others we have had of highly estimable character—Duff and Cooke were my friends—and cannot remember their fall but with great grief. My ship shattered and torn is gone to England—and in her is Mr. Lloyd the surgeon—a man for whose skill and character I have a great respect—and wish very much to be of service to him—I would be much obliged if you could remove him into some situation where he might not go to sea again. I intend to do him all the kindness I can for he deserves it—and would be glad if he could in the mean time be appointed to anything stationary that would prevent his going to sea again—I believe if it is in your power you will oblige me—I shall receive it as a very great kindness.

'I hope your sons are well, and am my dear Sir with great regard

'Your faithfull Humble Serv.,

'Cutht. Collingwood.

'I am growing very feeble—and very old—worn to a thread.'

The doctor's brother, the gallant soldier, Colonel William Harness, married Miss Elizabeth Bigge, whose mother was sister to Mrs. Croke. That the course of their young love did not run entirely smoothly is proved by a letter from the lady in which the ardour of her affection is masked indeed, but not hidden, under the stilted propriety of the style. She writes in an elegant Italian hand without address or date.

'One of the best of men will I flatter myself excuse my entering on a correspondence with him clandestinely—but will with me think it inconsistent with the duty I owe to the most indulgent of Mother's; let this one letter for the present suffice—some happier period may arrive when I may be allowed by my dearest friends the privilege of writing to you—until then—be content with only hear-

ing of me through the kind friendship of your valuable correspondent who I know from his native goodness of Heart will take pleasure in adding favours to the many we have already received from him . . . as I must be convinced that Interest has had no share in your attachment to me, I will therefore place the most implicit faith in the affection you profess—my sentiments in regard to yourself you are not a stranger to—but I cannot be happy whilst I feel a consciousness of doing wrong by engaging in an affair of the greatest consequence to myself and friends, without their knowledge and approbation—yet I have much to hope from the good opinion my mother entertains of you—and I know she is not ignorant that you once had a partiality for me—I wish I could take courage and disclose the whole—but at present I find myself unequal to the task. How happy have I been made, when at any time your name has been mentioned—to hear my mother join in praising, and speaking of you in the highest terms possible; in short she believes you to be a truly good young man—the principal requirement I'm sure she would wish for in the Husband for her child—and I am certain her views for me are not beyond a genteel sufficiency to support me in the station in which I have been bred up—trusting in your constancy I will endeavour to be as happy as I can—and will with you repose the whole on the mercy of a just Providence and with patience wait the event. . . . Your Brother Richard often pleasures us with his company—he is a sensible clever little fellow—and a great favourite with us all—with everybody—and not the less so with me for the great resemblance he bears to a certain friend of mine who is seldom absent from my thoughts—good health and happiness constantly attend you is the sincere wish of her who will be

'Ever yours
'E. B.'

Probably the temporary lack of a 'genteel sufficiency' was the only obstacle in the way of their engagement and 'Betsy' married her Mr. Harness (as he was then) somewhere about the year 1790. We see him in his miniature, resplendent in elegant frilled shirt and the scarlet coat of his regiment, with its gold epaulettes and white facings. A good, grave face under a powdered wig with neat curls. His wife's miniature

is there too, but not as he knew her, for William and his 'dearest Betsy' were not granted many years of married life; and for the greater part of the time William was serving abroad. She appears in her picture a strong-featured, elderly lady of much dignity and beauty wearing a truly marvellous frilled white headdress.

In the box is a letter from a waggish friend of the family, written before the wedding.

'Winchendon,
'Thursday Morning.

'Dear Miss,

'If it is a fine day to-morrow, and You should be inclin'd to walk, bend your lovely Footsteps towards Hartwell Langley, that I may have the Pleasure of meeting, and Honour of greeting you. Did You ever know such heavenly weather? Do You not admire it? Doesn't it exhilarate, and give you Spirits? Do not you wish for its Continuance? Do you take proper advantage of it, and strengthen yourself by Exercise? There's a Military Word, and, doesn't that please you? I say, Bigg; I wish You had a good thousand a year; We should see You then dashing away with an Equipage unequalld: A superb Carriage, beautiful Horses, and the handsomest and most elegant Harness in the world.

'I hope you are all well, Yea, very well: It's well if you are: Farewell.

'I am
'Ben Vassar.

'Ma's Compliments to the Family.'

In 1795 William Harness was serving in the campaign in the Dutch wars. Aunt Croke writes to commiserate with his wife.

Hampstead, Jan^y. 27th, 1795.

'You have well imagined my Dearest Betsy the late anxiety I have felt on your and dear Mr. Harness's account, for indeed I never suffer'd more than during the recent transactions in Holland.

... To hear that he was safe and well was joy indeed. . . . When I last wrote to you how unexpected was this dreadful anxiety, but I think the next day brought the account of the perfidy and treachery of the French, and the severe setting in of the frost forwarded their diabolical purposes—how detestable are the Dutch for their conduct.'

She goes on to tell her country niece of the London fashions.

'The hair is worn quite the same—the bonnets are very small, and velvet most fashionable—Mrs. P. intends buying herself one when she goes next to Town—I will get Swainson to copy it in paper or some way, and send it in the parcel—I don't think full muslin sleeves are now worn, but will enquire—your sattin gown will only want a very short waist, plaited very far back—three broad tucks in it are enough—but more than four must not be. I dare say that you have strings on the sides of your stays, to tie your coats up high to—or else the space from your gown through your upper coat will show itself and look ugly.'

The next view of Elizabeth Harness is contained in a small brown leather-covered volume which was her diary and account book for the year 1797. The first entry is 'This book is.' We see her then, the careful young housekeeper with her three little children, the adored husband away fighting in India. Every week or two there is an entry 'wrote to my dear Mr. Harness' or 'a letter from dear Mr. Harness'—letters which took two or three months at least to arrive. In June she notes that her letter has gone by 'the last ship this season,' and it is not till September 17th that she hears again from her 'handsome Harness.'

Household matters and little acts of charity are faithfully chronicled. A frequent entry is 'Beggar $\frac{1}{2}d.$,' and from time to time a certain Molly Hawley is paid sums varying from 1s. to 5s. for 'the poor children's schooling.' Five times during the year occurs the 'Great Wash' and on other

occasions ale and small beer are brewed. Milk goes up 1d. a gallon, and the fact that the family had rabbits for dinner is worthy of mention. Sixpence is spent on sending Nanny to the Play and three days later the two maids go to the Play for 1s. An occasional twopence is spent on Toys. The children's doings are now and then reported. 'Dear Jemima' is inoculated, she has her first shoes, which cost 1s. 3d., and a little later she walks alone. Jane is evidently learning to sew, and 1s. is spent on a thimble for her. Charles has a birthday on March 21st, and a month later it is recorded that 'Dear Charles put on his trousers to-day.' A good deal of money (according to the standards of the time) is spent on clothes for this precious little boy. 'Cloth for Charles's night and day shirts' costs £1 6s. 0d., cambric for Charles is 13s., making his clothes 12s. 6d. and blue cloth for his great-coat costs 14s. 6d. For herself Mrs. Harness notes that 12s. 3d. is spent on 'a straw bonnet lined.' Letters are a heavy expense, and cost anything from 6d. to 1s. 6d. It is a quiet life in which the chief excitement (apart from Mr. Harness's letters) is drinking tea with friends. 'Aunt Croke' is a frequent companion on these expeditions; and in turn the same friends come to drink tea and sometimes stay to supper.

Later on Charles goes away to school at Leicester and sends a letter calculated to wring a mother's heart. In an uneven blotted schoolboy hand he writes :

'My very very dear Mama,

'I write you these lines to tell you that yesterday morning I felt a violent pain in my head which continued from that time till I came into School in the evening. Master Hill said that it was the custom for every boy when he had anything the matter with him to tell Mr. Heyrick. I did so, he felt my pulse, and asked me whether my head felt hot. I said it did and thereupon he told me to keep as still as possible that night and to-day I feel very sick and ill. When I saw you on Thursday I did not think it was the last

time of seeing you therefore I did not kiss you, but I hope I shall see you and my sisters again before you leave Oadby as I think it my duty to kiss you dear Mama You have not sent me my French Grammar, as I want it to get my lesson.

'Have you heard from dear Papa and send my love to Auntie when you see her. Send a thousand kisses to Jane and Jemima. Excuse the many blunders I have made as my tears confused me very much.

'Adieu my dear Mama,

'Believe me I am and always shall be

'Your truly affectionate and dutiful Son

'C. P. W. Harness.

'P.S.—Pray answer my letter to come by Mr. Mile. I am very glad to hear you are all well.'

Soon, however, he writes in happier vein.

Leicester, April 11th, 1801.

'I am glad to tell you that I am in good health, and like school very well, also I go on with my French very well; I am glad to hear that James Walch dined with you, and I did not wonder at Jane and Jemima being glad because we always were so when he came. . . . There is going to be a speaking day soon, and the four headboys will speak, and the Mayor and Corporation will come and hear them.'

A letter written to 'Auntie Croke' gives a cheerful picture of nursery life at Dronfield.

'Dear Auntie

'I thank you very much for your kind letter and the half-crown. I am very well Pray write to me soon and tell Jane to write soon. I should like very much to be in the band to call you to breakfast now, I suppose little Jemima plays on the little trumpet.'

Another letter to his aunt shows the difficulties in the way of returning for the holidays.

'I do not know how I am to get home, without I go by Derby and then I must go by myself, without any body comes for me.

All the Chaises etc. will be taken for people to go to Nottingham to vote, and if I do get a place in the Coach, I shall not be able to get through Nottingham for the mob, so that I must go by Derby for I cannot go any other way.'

Meanwhile, the father of this little family is campaigning in India with Sir Arthur Wellesley. An extract from the *Bombay Gazette* of August 29th, 1808, tells of a fort 'carried by escalade, with the utmost gallantry and rapidity' by forces under the command of Lieut.-Col. Harness, Field-Officer of the day. There are many letters in the box from the Colonel to the wife whom he was never to see again—long, loving, soldierly letters.

Several communications from the future Iron Duke are also to be found in the collection. Most of them are concerned with military detail, but here is one with a more human touch.

'Serilingapatam, February 2nd, 1808.

'My dear Colonel,

'I have received your letter of the 31st January which has given me great satisfaction. It rarely happens (particularly in this country) that it is in the power of an officer in command to please those who are under his orders; and when he is so fortunate it is to be attributed as much to their good dispositions as to any efforts he may have made for that purpose. I regret exceedingly on publick as well as on private grounds, that the 74th rgt. is removed from Bangalore; But you must have been long enough in this country to perceive that the public Interest and convenience are not upon all occasions the cause of the publick measures.

'I don't think that your corps will be drafted At least not for some time; although I have seen the resolutions of thanks from the Court of Directors, and their songs of triumph, the best Item of all of which is the prospect of permanent peace in India, and of course the consequent diminution of the military establishments and expences.

'I think you are right in going to England even if the 74th should remain here.

'Believe me My Dear Colonel

'Your's most faithfully,

'Arthur Wellesley.'

Lieut.-Col. Harness,
74th regt.

The Colonel never reached England, and it was only eleven months later, on January 2nd, 1804, that he died. 'His country has lost a brave and distinguished officer,' writes his friend, Thomas Christie, 'society a most valuable member, those who enjoyed his intimacy a most estimable friend.' And James Walch, father of Charles's schoolboy friend, writes: 'Every officer and soldier in the 80th Regt. feels the death of that worthy Colonel with the utmost regret.'

General Wellesley himself wrote an account of the Colonel's sickness and death.

'Camp at Eliehpour, June 10th, 1804.

'Dear Sir,

'I received only last night your letter of the 25 April and I beg to assure you that the respect and regard which you profess for your late friend Colonel Harness have tended to increase the good opinion which I had already entertained of your character. . . .

'Colonel Harness was taken ill a day or two before the battle of Argann on the 29th Nov^{br}., and he was so unwell upon that occasion as to be delirious when the Troops were going into the action and I was obliged to order him into his Palanquin. After the battle of Argann the Army made some rapid marches towards Eliehpour in order to prevent the Enemy from taking a new position under the protection of the fort of Ganilghan which did Col. Harness no good; and on our arrival at Eliehpour he went into that place for the benefit of his health. He remained there during the siege of Ganilghan and I saw him afterwards as the Army was marching through Eliehpour towards Nagpour and he was much recovered. Peace having been concluded with the Rajah of Berar, the Army returned to the westward through Eliehpour; and I

saw Colonel Harness again much recovered ; but he appeared to have a shortness of breath which I attributed to weakness, particularly as he had no complaint at that time, yet said that he did not feel himself sufficiently recovered to join the Army, a measure to which I earnestly urged him. The last time I saw him was about the 25th Dec^r. and a few days afterwards I heard of his Death. . . .

‘ Believe me, dear Sir,
 ‘ ever your most faithfully,
 ‘ Arthur Wellesley.’

It is a very different small boy from the child of two or three years ago who writes to his mother bravely shouldering his responsibility as the only man of the family—a characteristic that constantly appears in his letters as he gets older.

Brampton, Sept. 21st, 1804.

‘ My very dear Mama,

‘ You cannot think how glad I am to hear that you are pretty well in health ; as you say, *What a change it is !* but you may depend upon it, that I will make you as happy as I possibly can, by attending to my lessons when at school, and by being dutiful to you when at home. *I feel very dull at times when I think about it, but when I do, I recollect that my dear Papa is in a much happier world than we are, and that we shall soon meet again.*’

Presently Charles leaves school and goes to the Royal Military College at Great Marlow. The family are now living at Aylesbury, and later they move to Stanmore in Middlesex. Charles’s letters and college reports show him capable, upright, amusing, affectionate, full of tender concern for his widowed mother and his two young sisters. He longs for news from home and in his letters to his sisters—loving, teasing, saucy letters—he sometimes complains of the infrequency of their correspondence. ‘ Don’t faint or rave at the beginning of this letter,’ he writes as the heading of a missive to the errant Jane ; and continues :

'My dearest Jane,

'Why have I not heard from you; I have even thought that you were offended at my saying that I would not write to you out of spite (because she had not written to him); but, however, be that as it may; if you do not forgive me, I forgive you.'

In 1807 Charles passes 'a very strict examination before the Duke of Kent.' The following year the cadets are reviewed by the Prince of Wales.

'He said,' writes Charles to his mother, 'that upon his honor, he was never so much delighted in his life, that no regiment could have done better; and though I say it that should not say it, He asked who I was, and said I was a very fine young fellow, the Duke of Clarence was with him, and said the same. There was likewise a very fine show of female beauties in the College Grounds, I only wished for you to make it compleat.'

In 1809 Charles sailed with his regiment for India. Here is his miniature as he must have looked at about this time—an attractive curly-headed young man in blue coat and ample white stock with a good open face and steady brown eyes. His farewell letter to his sisters shows something of the trials of separation in those days of slow journeys and uncertain posts, and expresses elder-brotherly concern for their ladylike conduct.

'Newport, Isle of Wight,

'Feb^y. 9th, 1809.

'Perhaps you, my dearest girls, may not have an opportunity of hearing from me again for these six months, but depend upon it, you will never be from my thoughts. Pray, dear Jemima practise regularly at Miss Woodcock's, I shall have an opportunity of learning the flute on the voyage. Do not read any more novels, but read clever books to my aunt. Adieu, once more, my dearest Sisters. Adieu.'

A letter from a friend of the late Colonel gives a glimpse of Charles on his arrival in India.

Sept. 2nd, 1809,
Madras.

'From L. Norris, Lieut.-Col.

'My dear Madam,

'We were made very happy by the receipt of your kind letter by your dear Son, who is indeed a very fine young Man, he had been a month in the country before he found us out and only a few days before he was ordered to join his corps at Bangalore which is about 200 miles from this. But during those few days we had the pleasure of his company, I believe, some part of every day, poor fellow he struck me as being very like my dear friend his Father. . . . He is indeed a very fine Youth and it really grieved us to think what you must have felt at parting with him.

'The young man introduced himself to me and said his name was Harness, judge of my astonishment for I had not the least idea of ever seeing the Son of my much lamented friend in India. . . .

'He left Madras in high health and spirits and I have no doubt he will do very well particularly as the climate does not seem to disagree with him.'

Charles was seven years in India. He writes constantly and his letters are full of news. He dances, he acts, he gets into debt, he shows himself a keen and useful member of his profession.

'Seringapatam, Oct. 11th, 1812.

'My dearest Jane,

' . . . would to God I were with you, and accompanying you at all your Balls, and in all your rides. In India, we are completely exiles. We have had but one dance at Seringapatam since our arrival . . . that was . . . certainly a very pleasant one. You must know, dear Jane, that I am a great Lady's Man, and shall certainly, unless you guard them against it, captivate the hearts of all the young ladies at Stanmore. Do you think that you can find one of sense and beauty that will ensnare mine in return ?'

And eighteen months later :

'Quilon, April 16th, 1814.

'My own dearest Sisters,

'We make as much of Quilon as is possible and I assure you have a great deal of gaiety, and the 80th itself contribute largely to it. We have built a very pretty little Theatre. . . . I appeared for the first time in the character of Captain Absolute in the Rivals, and though I say it who should not say it, gained a great deal of applause. . . . James, Mrs. Shaw, and myself, all three drank dear *Jemima's* health in a bumper on the 31st of March, and we shall not forget dear *Jane's* on the 15th of July.'

In 1813, according to the curious practice of the time, Mrs. Harness buys her son a captaincy.

'Seringapatam, 28 Feb^{ry}., 1813.

'How can I sufficiently thank you, my dearest Mama, for the purchase of my company? I have seen my promotion in the Gazette, and my name as Captain in the Army list.'

All through that year he is eagerly hoping for leave and in December we find him drawing out money for the expenses of the voyage to England. But he was disappointed, and it is not until 1815 that the prospect of leave becomes almost a certainty. In preparation for his coming he writes a frank, penitent letter about his money difficulties.

'Quilon, January 3rd, 1815.

'My ever dearest Mother,

'My application for leave of absence has been forwarded by the Commander-in-Chief at Madras to Lord Moira for his approval so that I have now little doubt of success. I am therefore making every arrangement, and I trust before the middle of next month, that I shall be on my voyage to Old England, to the best of mothers, and to my dearest Sisters. I cannot keep from myself, my dearest Mama, that I am returning to you as the Prodigal Son, for I have been shamefully extravagant. I shall have much of this nature to confess to you, and I rely on your goodness, which you have ever shown me, to grant me your forgiveness. But this let me assure you

of, Heaven knows it is the only Vice I have been guilty of. I never was a Gambler. I have never ventured nor ever lost or won to the value of a Pagoda. . . . I have never been addicted to drinking. I can write in this manner to a Mother without being accused of self commendation, but true as what I have said it, nothing can atone for my extravagance.'

Two days later Charles writes again on a very different subject. There has been frequent mention in his correspondence of Mrs. Shaw, a young widowed sister of his lifelong friend, James Walch, who, he says, 'is to me a brother and a very excellent young man.' Probably Mrs. Harness was not entirely taken by surprise when her son announced his betrothal to the lady of whom he had written three years before :

'Mrs. Shaw has been some time a widow, and is now but 22, she was married when only 14; what pity that she should have been thus thrown away on such a brute as her husband is represented as having been; she is a most pleasing woman of extremely genteel manners and very well informed, for which she deserves the whole credit of instructing herself.'

He sends a rapturous letter, too long for quotation, looking forward to being home in July or August and introducing his Katherine to his relations.

It is the last letter of the series, and now there comes tragedy; for in September the charming and well-loved young soldier was dead. He must have been about 25 years old. There is no record of the reason or manner of his dying. The final word is with James Walch and contains a generous gesture from a faithful friend. Here is the document :

'Quilon, September 14th, 1815.

'I, Lieutenant James W. H. Walch, do hereby certify that I wave any claim I may be supposed to have to the late Captain Harness's Company (as Senior Lieutenant of the 80th Regiment)

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should His Royal Highness the Prince Regent be graciously pleased to allow of the said company being sold for the benefit of his Family.

*'J. Walch,
'Lt. 80th Regt.'*

Before taking leave of this rather tragic family, here are two letters from Jane and Jemima which show the young ladies suitably in pursuit of health and the accomplishments of gentility.

'My dear Mama,' writes Jane in a beautiful neat sloping hand, 'As Jemima has written so short a letter, I will endeavour to recollect something to add. I hear the East India Fleet is expected, so I hope we shall have a letter from dear Charles as the Fleets may have passed each other. I suppose he is now in India. This time next year we shall expect him if he is not arrived and then as you say we may go into Buckinghamshire together. I think you will be pleased with my drawing. I have just finished a large group of flowers, you know you wished me to do them large. With Mr. de Fleury I am drawing Mount Vesuvius, it is to be varnished to look like oils. I think you will like it. Jemima goes on very well with her Music. I would add more but I am just going to take a walk with Mr. Brown. I remain,

*'My dear Mama,
'Your affectionate daughter,
'Jane Harness.'*

Jemima writes vivaciously from Brighton, where she has presumably been sent for the sake of her health.

'Oct. 16th, 1811.

'Mrs. Bearcroft (her hostess) is an old woman of between fifty and sixty very fat and dressed in black and french grey. She has three daughters, Miss Kitty (who lisps) Miss Fanny and Miss Sukey.

. . . I put on my dark gown this morning as I thought it would not be congruous to wear the light coloured gowns now and the Black Stuff one hereafter. I have a bedroom to myself and here I am sitting writing. . . . I have been this morning to see the people bathe and I am sure I shall not like it at all for they are carried out

of the machine between two immense women who dip them into the Sea and when they come out all their clothes (to be sure they have nothing but a bathing gown) stick to them while all the gentlemen stand and laugh at them—I am to go in to-morrow morning. Though last not least for (I am sure I have been thinking of you all along) I hope you got home safely last night and that you found Anne's cold almost well with Jane and Betsy's nursing and I hope Eliza's is now nearly well pray give my love to them. Heigh-ho!

"I wish I wish I wish in vain,
I wish I was at home again."

I wish you would send me some books those travels in Sicily and Malta and those kind of things and my prayer book. Do not let me stay longer than a month. I wish too for a pair of new walking shoes a brown silk cap and a bottle of ink and do not let me go back in the coach for it is so disagreeable I cannot bear it.

Lastly, here is a tit-bit from the bottom of the box—a cobbler's statement of his account. Possibly we have here a reference to the 'Miss Kitty (who lisps).'

		£	s.	d.
1796.				
Dec. 4	Clog'd up Miss	.	.	10
	Mended Miss	.	.	2
1797	Heeltapt bound	.	.	11
Jan. 7	up Madam			
	Toe tapt Master	.	.	8
Feb ^r . 20	Turned up clog'd up	.	.	1 6
	Mended the Maid			
	Heel tapt Master	.	.	3
	Clog'd turned up the Maid	.	.	1 3
	Lined bound and put on piece			
	to Madam	.	.	4 3
March 5	Sticking Miss Kitty	.	.	3
16	Soling the Maid	.	.	8
April 14th	Tapping Madam	.	.	6
	Tacked a piece on Master	.	.	2
				<hr/>
				11 5

There are no more Harnesses left in my family. My mother remembers as a child a rather plain old lady who was her cousin, Jemima Harness. She wore a white cap with goffered frills all round her face and had a little pudding specially made for her every day. She also drank cocoa, into which she dipped her buttered toast, a proceeding which horrified her small cousin. Her sister, Jane, who had been a beauty, also died unmarried.

The last of the line to bear the family name was my much-loved great-uncle, General Arthur Harness, great-nephew of Colonel William. With his death in 1927 came the end of the male line in this branch. Their name has passed, but in their letters we still have the record of a simple honourable family who, in conditions not far distant in time, and yet so different from those of the present century, lived and loved and sorrowed, feared God and enjoyed life, much as their descendants do to-day. Outward circumstances may alter, but the greater things do not change.

A CANOE IN BURMA.¹

BY MAJOR R. RAVEN-HART.

CANOE-CRUIISING depends for its success, more than do any of the faster modes of travel, on country and people. Burma is so entirely what the greenhorn like myself expects from 'the East,' palms and pagodas and elephants and jungles; and the Burmese people are so entirely pleasant, friendly, hospitable, quietly happy, that a canoe-cruise there was bound to be a success.

But in addition, last winter was an ideal moment for the cruise, just as Burma was realising that it had got rid of India at last, and was breathing out a huge waking-sigh of relief. Nowhere did I meet with any regret for what was regarded as an alien, distant, incompetent administration which had kept Burma as the dumping-ground for its less satisfactory junior employees: nowhere, that is, except in one of the most hidebound clubs of the Indianised capital, refuge of the sort of person who is annoyed when the Burman does not understand Hindustani.

Everywhere else there was the feeling: 'No, are we really clear of that gang? Why, now we can do something; and perhaps now a Burman may now and then get a job in Burma.'

The subordinate civil service has been an Indian preserve. 'The Burman is lazy, unreliable, dishonest': still, even a casual visitor like myself may feel surprise at finding the Post Offices entirely staffed by Indians; or the Civil Surgeons

¹ 'A Canoe in Lithuania,' by Major Raven-Hart appeared in *Cornhill* in January, 1937, and 'A Canoe in Florida,' in February, 1938.

almost always Indians or Anglo-Indians (out of ten I met, nine were one or the other—the tenth was, I think, British). Height of absurdity, when a school is supposed to teach English to Burmese boys, must the only suitable principal be an Indian, whose mother-tongue is neither the one nor the other?

That Indians dominate the retail commerce of Burma is the fault of the Burmese: that they so largely dominate the subordinate Civil Service is partly the fault of the Burmese, but largely also of the Indian Administration. Whatever the causes, the result is that there is growing up among the Burmans a hatred of Indians which may have terrible results: already in the Rebellion of 1930-1 the enemy, the *naga-serpent*, the foreign snake which was to be crushed by the Burmese *galon-griffin* and tiger, was less a representation of the British authorities than of the Indian intruders.

Someone (I was never able to trace the source and make due acknowledgment) has said that the Burmese are 'the Irish of the East.' Anyone who visits Ireland is bound to like the easy-going, friendly, happy Irishman: anyone who visits Burma is bound to like the Burmese. Whether the first impression persists when they have to be met for years as colleagues, subordinates, business associates is less certain—in both cases.

At any rate, superficially they are charming; and such superficial charm is all a tourist needs. I saw much of them: I slept as a rule in villages, at Government bungalows or Headmen's houses, and lived 'on the country': rice and vegetable-stews on the upper river, rice and vegetable-curries lower down, and as drink the safe sugarless and milkless, pale topaz tea. Everywhere people were friendly, charming: all I can reproach them with is their inquisitiveness, and even this is not at all the monkey-like curiosity of

many countries, questions asked merely for the sake of asking them, but rather the intelligent interest of an intelligent small boy. The boat, a canvas-and-rubber collapsible of kayak shape, was of course of huge interest to these river-minded people, who swim literally before they walk; but even more than the boat did the double-ended paddles fascinate them as an entire and very practical novelty. Almost everywhere I had to demonstrate the stroke to them, and how much more efficient it was than their single-bladed paddle (such as we associate with the Canadian canoe): at one village there was awaiting me next morning a youngster propelling a dug-out with a double paddle extemporised overnight from a bamboo and bits of packing-cases, and demanding that I should commend or correct his style.

And another advantage of their inquisitiveness is that it breaks the ice. When you have answered a few dozen questions—where you started the trip, and where it is going to end, and how old you are (an invariable query, its omission almost an insult), and what the boat is made of, and what it cost—they cannot, and do not, object to a few dozen questions being asked in return. What it costs to build a house, for instance: £50 will give you a really swagger one, half of that will suffice, tree-trunk corner-poles and bamboo rafters, plank floor raised on stilts five feet or so from the ground, matting walls, a grass thatch—all such suitable material that one feels as if the houses had grown up with the forest around them. Or whether they fish with cast-net; or the huge dip-net, fifteen feet and more square, on bamboo frames raised and lowered by bamboo derricks; or in a few places with the really curious contrivance of glossy white boards set sloping down from the gunwales into the water, so that the fish take them for moonlight and jump aboard by dozens. Or why there is a *nat*-spirit shrine

on the shore, a little doll's-house complete with verandah and stairway up to it, with a few offered fruits or flowers inside : maybe he claims a yearly victim by drowning unless thus propitiated ; or maybe he governs a whirlpool, and the only way to get safely through it is by steering for his house in salutation and turning out at the last moment only, a neat combination of leading-mark and superstition ; or maybe he is there just because he has always been there.

Needless to say, my own knowledge of Burmese did not suffice to answer their questions or to ask my own : I did get one Burmese word thoroughly into my head, 'U,' one of the shortest words in the language. It is a useful word, too : it means an egg, or the bow of a boat, or an uncle (a title of respect for older men), or a cape or headland, or one's intestines, according to how you pronounce it. The trouble was that I could only pronounce it in one way, and my way did not seem to mean any of those things.

But I had with me companions who could talk for me : a Kachin schoolboy of fourteen for the first part, and then a Burmese youngster. They were excellent companions, both of them, and picturesque figures with their squarely-modelled, strong bare brown torsos : the schoolboy wore baggy black cotton trousers, cut apparently to fit a baby elephant, and the older lad a pink cotton skirt to his ankles. Both had hideous but necessary Chinese-made felt hats against the sun : the Burman sins against his traditional dress rarely except in headgear, such hats as these, or uproarious cloth caps, or (unexpectedly) woollen Balaclava helmets.

We made as a rule short runs, so as to have time at our daily destinations to see things and meet people. Local legends were a frequent topic on those evenings, sleepily, sun-dazedly smoking after large and welcome meals. And

such legends abound in Burma—there are were-tigers with six claws on each foot ; and men who are not really human, detected because they hold their thumbs inside their fists ; and witches that turn into rolling luminous balls ; and of course *nats* by myriads. The jungle is their special domain—rivers also, and mountains often, but always the forests ; and all hunters, Burmese or European, respect them. No shoot begins without the guns being leaned up against the trunk of a *nat*-tree and food and drink placed below (and later removed and eaten by the hunters, the offer sufficing) : at any rate, no successful shoot. And the first bird or animal shot must ‘baptise’ the gun with a drop of its blood on the barrel ; but on the other hand, a gun is ruined with which a monkey has been shot, by accident as a rule, or to drink the blood of the still-living animal as an unfailing rejuvenator.

Older weapons persist also. There is a powerful cross-bow, so powerful that leg-leverage is needed to bend it, shooting light arrows ‘feathered’ with palm-leaves with force enough to bring down large birds ; and there is also an amusing light bow, double-stringed, shooting pellets of dried mud from a pocket lying across the two strings. I say ‘amusing’ because I tried one, after its small-boy owner had four times missed a jay which was flying about like an escaped firework : I hit my left thumb-nail three times with it, and it gave great pleasure to the onlookers.

That is another pleasant characteristic of the Burmese : they laugh readily, in amusement at you or at themselves, but you never feel that it is a contemptuous laugh. A smile is a passport in Burma : over and over again when I smiled at some urchin, irresistible in scanty skirt and perky topknot, he came at once to me, and grinned confidently up into my face, and babbled unintelligibly to his new-found friend. The older people are equally ready to be friendly,

and are hospitable in the extreme : I was continually being invited—to sit and rest, to drink tea, even to take a few puffs at a family cheroot, the huge Burmese affair that is passed from smoker to smoker, a foot long and an inch in diameter, wrapped in maize-leaf and tasting as if stuffed with dried hay. And either the Europeans have been infected or else the Government and the big trading Companies send to Burma only hospitable, helpful people.

My cruise began at Myitkyina, well above steamer-navigation, and thus included the 'first defile' which the steamer-tourist misses, a Dürer-landscape of fierce, bare rocks all across the river, stove-polished as on Nile and Amazon, and grudgingly conceding a bare passage at the last moment : thanks to the absence of current in low water there was no danger, despite terrifying warnings of well-meaning friends. It included also the 'second defile,' with the eight-hundred feet sheer cliff that looms over a perky white and gold pagoda : pagodas are the great feature of Burmese scenery, perched like impudent sparrows on over-awing precipices and refusing to be intimidated, or dotted like exclamation-marks just where needed to call attention to an outstanding bluff or bend or peak.

Apart from the defiles, and the almost constant distant hills, the river is, frankly, dull, with low shores and sandbanks and little current. Still, those sandbanks gave excellent camp-sites (except when they had tiger-tracks on them) and good bathing, in the cold, jade-green, jade-translucent water which clouded only slowly in my six hundred miles to Chouk. It was not the river itself, it was the towns and villages that made the cruise unforgettable : Tagaung, once capital of Burma, with an incongruously Polynesian *nat* in his two-story house under palms and tamarinds ; Bhamo, more Chinese than Burman ; Mya-daung, where

I ate peacock for Christmas turkey (and spent Boxing Day in bed with indigestion, traditionally) ; Sagaing, peppered with pagodas and stretched out in the sun like a sleepy cat ; Moda, one long street lined with tall palm-trunks at all angles, the sunlight sliding like butter through them ; Shwegu, where they make pleasant brown pottery under the houses ; and more and more. Mandalay itself, of course ; but Mandalay is not really a river town, its shore a squalid muddle, its streets shabby—it is a completely negligible place, quickly forgotten apart from the palace (a challenge to all our ideas of æsthetics, looking-glasses and tinsel refusing to be tawdry) and the Arakan pagoda (with stalls selling everything fascinating, above all, toys for children that I had to buy if only to give away and photograph, with their overwhelmed new owners). Pagan on the other hand—but it would take pages to talk about Pagan, once a city as large as the County of London, to-day with over five thousand pagodas or pagoda-ruins, many of them with brickwork never excelled in the world and rarely equalled ; and dating from before the Norman conquest.

But, after all, what makes me want to go back to Burma (yes, there are plenty of other rivers to do) is not those towns, nor the superb moments of scenery, nor the perfect weather, but the people themselves. There is no need to drink Irrawaddy water or throw coins into a Trevi-fountain : Burma is the Burmans, and the memory of them will suffice to force your return.

'MOBY.'¹

BY THURSTAN TOPHAM.

HE was not known as Moby to begin with, or for many seasons. At first he was just one more ordinary little troutlet, indistinguishable by any peculiarity from the rest of his few hundred brothers and sisters, all hatched from the same lot of brown trout eggs that had been sent to a private Quebec lake, the owner of which, a keen fisherman and conservationist, wishes to stock experimentally with brown trout.

When he hatched out he was an odd, deformed-looking creature, carrying attached to him a great underslung bulging bag, the umbilical vesicle, or yolk-sac, that nourishes the tiny trout until they have grown strong enough to hunt and eat the animalculæ that are their first natural food. During the few weeks that elapsed before his yolk-sac had absorbed, he was a very delicate and helpless thing indeed, moving but little, and awkwardly. Numbers of his companions died at this critical stage, when they are so sensitive to injury, but he managed to survive the precarious period and at last found himself, with many others, able to swim easily around the carefully covered tank in which they had been placed.

Each day he grew stronger and more active, and by the time he was three-quarters of an inch long would worry at a drowned midge, or a tiny shred of liver with the best.

Then the young brown trout were removed to a larger

¹ Regular readers of CORNHILL may remember the account of the home of 'Moby,' published under the title 'On a Canadian River,' in March 1935.

protected rearing-pool constructed in the bed of a streamlet. Here a considerable amount of natural food was allowed to wash in, besides the liver and dry food that was supplied. Moby thrived wonderfully as did most of the trout, for the water temperature and conditions were excellent.

The Owner, who was away, sent orders in July for his trout to be liberated. They now averaged from three to four inches long. The man who received the order was a not particularly bright French-Canadian guide and he made a slight error in carrying it out. His instructions ran that the trout were to be planted in the stream that emptied from the lake. There was a high log dam in the stream, not far from the lake, and the man put the trout in below the dam. Great was the wrath of the Owner when this was found out. There were bass in the stream below the dam.

This fact Moby soon discovered. He was overawed by the size of the big stream at first, and stayed for a while on the rim of the shallows where he had been turned loose with his fellows. But growing bolder, he joined an exploring party, being of an inquiring nature even at that early date. The little trout swam in a group until they were at a point where the shallow abruptly deepened. Here they loitered, turning and darting half-timidly about. Suddenly something rushed upward from the deeper water beneath them, a huge and terrifying fury. It was only a small six-ounce bass, but to Moby it seemed a gigantic monster. He dashed impulsively for shallow water and from the corner of his wide-angled eye he caught a glimpse of quick tragedy. The bass had seized in its jaws one of the trout that had swum beside him. Moby hid in the shadow of a pebble, motionless. So this was the world. You ate or you were eaten. Moby determined to eat.

He was always hungry, always nosing about for tiny

larvæ. Soon he forgot about the bass, though he instinctively stayed in the shallows. But a great water-bird scared him away, its beak striking so close as to brush his back as he shot away for safety into the deeps. He dodged another young bass which pursued him as he flickered downstream, and finally eluded it by entering a narrow vertical cleft in a rock. The cleft was too narrow for the bass to enter, luckily for Moby, whose tail was tingling. The bass stayed by the crack, eying him hungrily for some moments, then darted off after a minnow. Moby began to nibble at the larvæ that clung on the rock. He swam up the current that passed through the cleft and thus came to the other side of the rock. Here was a small enclosed pool, about a foot deep and a couple of yards long. A miniature waterfall splashed into its upper end, running out again through the cleft by which he had entered. He explored the pool in short furtive dashes, nibbling all the time. No other living creature of anything like his own size appeared to exist in the pool, except a pair of crawfishes which he eyed with some respect, because they were savage, ugly-looking things. But after he had watched them warily for a time he ceased to bother much about them. They swam backwards in a ridiculous fashion and seemed to be completely occupied in busily grubbing about the silt.

He mostly lay invisible below the hollow rock, ready to dart out and seize on tit-bits that were washed over the fall. The morning after his arrival an earthworm flopped over, dropped just before from the beak of a flying blackbird. It sprawled and writhed on the floor of the pool, very large and obvious. Moby gazed at it fearfully for a few seconds, then slowly finned himself nearer to observe it more closely, but ready to dash away if it appeared to be dangerous.

It was a great deal longer than himself, certainly ; but it

looked—yes—it did look remarkably like food. That pink waving tail . . . He flashed in and nipped it with his tiny teeth. It was food ! It was *grand* food !

He worried away at the tail, and the worm squirmed frantically. But like a bull-dog Moby held on, tugging and chewing until he had bitten off a piece of the worm. This he hurriedly bolted, then dashed in again for another hold, now farther down the length of the worm, which tried to throw a coil round him in its despair. But he was now devoid of fear and gnawed away until the doomed worm had lost a further length. This longer piece he swam away with, to swallow bit by bit, but soon he came back with a morsel of worm still sticking from his mouth. It vanished as he gulped and made a greedy rush for the remainder. In a remarkably short time there was no more worm and Moby retired to digest his meal.

Henceforward, no worm that ever dropped into that pool remained uneaten for more than a few minutes. Moby pounced on them all like a flash. The only thing he may have thought was that they were too infrequent. But larvæ and caddis abounded, spiders, ants and flies of various species obligingly fell into the pool, and Moby waxed fat on them all. He was happy as he sensed life and strength surging within him.

One evening after rain, when the water was somewhat higher than usual, a heavy splash startled him. He was dismayed to see that another fish, a huge monster of nearly half a pound, had arrived by way of the fall. A nasty-looking fellow too, black-backed, with a grey-white belly, and wearing an appalling row of fleshy whiskers round his wide, ugly slit of a mouth. It was in fact a 'barbotte,' or bull-pout,¹ and Moby stayed cautiously hidden beneath his

¹ Common freshwater catfish, abundant in most Quebec waters. A very ugly fish.

rock, staring at him. The new-comer waved his feelers before his mouth in an ominous manner, and gradually edged himself nearer to Moby's hiding-place.

Looking him carefully over, Moby at last decided he was perhaps not so dangerous, after all. He did not appear able to swim very fast, by the build of him. His slow, insidious approach, however, made Moby a little uneasy. It might be better to avoid him, as would not be difficult, until he were sure. Moby swam easily out from his rock to the other end of the pool and began to search for food again.

What was that? A worm? Indeed, a worm; after the rain he might expect several. He swam quickly towards it, seized it. A fine big worm. As he was chewing on its tail he suddenly became aware of the barbotte making swiftly at him, open-mouthed. He let go the worm and flashed away. The barbotte engulfed the worm, which vanished like a rope slipping down a well; moved its jaws about greedily, as if smacking its gristly lips, and swam towards Moby.

Moby knew now that the barbotte would swallow him too if it could catch him. The pool was safe no longer. He darted towards the cleft by which he had originally entered, and slipped between the boulders. He had actually grown so much that he could barely pass through. Now he was in the main stream again and must find another home.

Somehow, by instinct and luck combined, he avoided the many hazards that beset a young trout trying to grow up in a world of adversaries, and arrived, as darkness fell, at the mouth of a tiny tributary stream. It was but a rivulet, and into it he impulsively turned. Upstream he swam, wriggling and splashing riskily over shallows, skirting swiftly around the deeper pools wherein an enemy might lurk unseen, until the stream had shrunk to a mere runlet,

overhung with meadow grasses that almost hid it from view. Clumps of alders grew along it here and there, and thrust their roots into its coolness. Under a tangle of these alder roots Moby rested at last, and here he remained for a long period, living well on the food that the rivulet supplied him with in abundance. He had reached a true sanctuary.

Even so, he barely escaped death on two occasions during his stay in the rivulet. The first time was from the bill of a heron that came there to hunt frogs and minnows; the second, from the hook that a farmer's boy dangled, worm-laden, before his nose one day. Luckily he had snapped at the loose end of the worm and he fell back as the boy pulled him up. The boy would have killed him, tiny and undersized as he was.

Shyness and caution were inborn in him, as in all brown trout, and with each new day he learned to be more wary. A moving shadow forever sent him darting into cover. The musk-rats that lived along the rivulet terrified him, and at first he fled in panic when they wandered through the muddy shallows, or swam through his pool, but finding they had no evil designs on him he became accustomed to their splashings, and simply avoided them. He grew rapidly, always, but as winter approached, some inner impulse bade him seek deep water where ice would not hold him in its iron grip.

So he sought the main stream again, one night when a late thunderstorm had swollen the waters of his refuge, and passed like a ghost, flitting downstream in quick darts of speed to a quiet deep pool where he met others of his kind that nature had urged, like himself, to prepare for winter.

In what manner he passed the long cold months of the Canadian winter lies somewhat of a mystery, that writers and students of natural history can but guess at. Probably

for the most part he lay half dormant and obscure at the bottom of a pool, under the shelter of a sunken log or stone. There was little food to be had, and though he had attained a length of six inches when the winter began, he grew little, if at all, during this hibernation.

But with the coming of spring, when the snows of winter melted and the long ice-bound waters swelled and surged in yellow flood, he woke and exulted in the earth's rebirth. His colouring became more silvery and he began to lose the faint barred markings that had earlier shown on his red-spotted flanks. Again for a while he found shelter in a smaller tributary, being not yet large or strong enough to withstand the mighty currents that swept the main stream, wrenching trees from its borders in a torrent of reckless energy, and scouring out sand-bars in frothing spume.

But as the spring floods subsided, he followed the receding waters, hungry as a famished wolf. Beetles and caddis-worms, ants and grubs were his prey until the sun's increasing strength began to bring forth insect life in full abundance. Now he feasted regally and put on weight in amazing fashion, so that soon he weighed a quarter of a pound, slightly better than normal. This was largely because he had been lucky in finding plenty of food early in life. He was now pouncing on baby minnows occasionally, and in the warm late spring evenings would often find a hatch of flies, and stay with it, eating greedily until his small stomach was distended. But his digestion was rapid and he was always ready for more. One night he sucked down a particularly attractive looking blue dun and was startled to receive an immediate sharp blow in his lower jaw.

He had taken a fisherman's dry fly, and was ignominiously hauled, kicking and flapping, from the stream, to be dropped on the grassy bank. Happily for him, the fisherman who

had plucked him from the water was his original Owner, though naturally Moby knew nothing of that. All he was aware of was being shaken gently from the tiny hook and dropped back in the stream, where he darted, terrified, to a dark patch of weeds, beneath which he hid, trembling. The Owner, however, was pleased. He knew now that at least one of his brown trout had survived.

That early taste of the hook served Moby well. From henceforth he carefully observed every fly before rising to it, and he was not hooked again for two years. In the meantime he dodged the bass, though now the smaller ones did not bother him. He grew big enough to defend himself against them, and became expert at disappearing when larger ones came in view. His eyes, wide-angled and never closed, took in objects behind him as well as in front.

So passed the summer, and with the fall Moby became aware of strange impulses that urged him to follow other trout. For there were other brown trout who had survived with him in the river. The eternal life-force was beginning to wake in him. His lower jaw grew slightly hooked, and he ranged upstream at the mysterious demand of sex, fighting queer battles with other males who followed the ascending females up tributary brooks, seeking, they knew not why, the gravelly bottoms in the currents that would wash their eggs and keep them alive. But Moby's selected mate, an immature young trout, was seized by a fish-seeking bear as she splashed before him up a shallow run in the brook, and Moby found no other mate that season.

Again the weary winter came, and passed. By late spring Moby was a well-grown, handsome fish of nearly a pound, and had put on stronger colours. His back and flanks were mottled richly with spots of purple-brown over the general deep ochre hue of his body, and along each side

he bore an uneven row of coral-red marks, as though a small paint-stained finger had touched him lightly here and there. He was the biggest of all the brown trout that were his fellow-colonists in the river, and few bass were large enough to annoy him now.

That summer was a long and warm one, and Moby revelled in it. Huge hatches of flies and insects followed each other right on from early spring, and there is nothing like an unlimited supply of insect food and warm weather to make a trout grow quickly. Moby also developed a taste for young crawfish. The old ones were yet too tough for him, though if he could find one that had just cast its horny shell he would make short work of it. In the hot dazzling sunlight hours he lay usually in deep cool water waiting for the evening shadows to fall over the river, but as night drew near, he would drift from his nook and cruise the stream until he found a hatch of flies on which he would feed, carefully but steadily. Darkness did not halt him, if anything he was more active then than in daylight. His sense of smell was acute; he knew not only the smell of food but also of inanimate forms such as rocks, stones and logs. His lateral line and the red spots near it, highly organised nerve-centres, served him as ears, conveying vibrations to his brain automatically.

He loved the pale light that the moon shed, and filtering unevenly through the spruce and balsam and birch, wove odd shadow patterns over the water. On such nights he would jump for the white millers that drifted overhead. But if a vee-shaped moving angle appeared on the surface to betray the spot where some otter or mink were swimming, he would sink to the floor of the pool, or steal like a shadow to the dark hollow beneath a sunken boulder, lying motionless but alert until assured of safety.

Sometimes when the midsummer sun beat vertically down and the water temperature rose high, he would leave the deeps and hang in the sweep of a foaming rapid. He knew how to find the spots where a sudden drop in the rock surface created a back-current that would sustain him against the swift downward rush of water. Here he would lie, enjoying sensuously the faint tickle of the driven air bubbles as they brushed him in passing, and revelling in the exhilaration of the oxygen-impregnated water.

Roving one night down-river in late summer, he entered the small overflow-stream that ran behind a dam and saw-mill. It joined the main river again two or three hundred yards below. Only the upper portion of it was artificial, having been cut to form a junction with the ancient deep-hollowed ravine of an almost dried-up brooklet. The old brook-bed was full of great rounded, moss-grown boulders and arched over with spreading tree-branches through which the sun's rays could barely penetrate, making it seem like a cool green cave. There was one good sized pool in it of two feet in depth. Here also a spring gurgled from the bank and added its cold clear flow to the stream.

The small children of the miller had made a tiny path down to the pool. They found it a pleasant spot in the summer's heat, and hidden near the cold spring they kept a little wooden cup that they had hollowed out from a maple-burl. Here they would come to sip the delicious ice-cold water and paddle in the pool, or make miniature dams such as all children love to build.

Moby had worked his way downstream during the night until he had reached this pool. It was cold and refreshing to him, and fat caterpillars fell into it from the leaves overhead. Also the stream abounded with tiny crawfish. So he had remained in the pool, relishing its lower temperature,

and when the children strayed down from the mill-house next morning he was still lying there in the shade of a boulder. The elder boy, a six-year-old, suddenly spotted him, and gave a shriek of joy at the discovery, pointing him out to his younger brother. They made immediate plans for his capture; the younger lad was despatched on a run to fetch a fishing-line, while the other kept watch to see that Moby did not escape.

The fish-line, a coarse affair of thick watercord with a large hook attached, was awkwardly baited with a fat earth-worm and lowered hopefully in front of Moby's nose. Moby felt alarm and annoyance, and backed away from it. There was no way of leaving the pool without exposing himself to danger. Above lay a swift pebbly run, studded with small round boulders, below was a shallow bar of shingle and sand extending several yards, before the water became deep enough again to allow him swimming room. The pool itself was hardly more than six feet in total length, and all Moby could do was to dodge in it from one rock to another.

The boys soon got weary of tempting Moby with the worm, realising the futility of their efforts. Another trip to the house produced a dilapidated old landing net, bequeathed to the children by some well-meaning fisherman. Direct action with the net suited their temperament much better, and Moby was sore beset, though he still eluded them. At last they hit on a more stealthily plan. The younger held the net still on the bottom while his brother poked at Moby with a stick, trying to steer him over the net.

The scheme worked finally, and Moby, panic-stricken, was raised from the pool. Death was never nearer him than at this moment. Then the boys laid the net down to

grasp their prize. A small brown hand closed around him and lifted him from the net. He squirmed, frantically lashing his tail. He began to slip slowly through those squeezing fingers ; his thin covering of slime aiding him. Then, unexpectedly, he had dropped, with a jar that shook his whole frame, to the edge of the brook. He doubled his body convulsively and straightened it like a twanging bow. The resultant jump sent him splashing over the shallow sand-bar. The boys ran after him shouting. He doubled and jumped again ; twisting, flapping, wriggling always, frenzied as a mad creature, which indeed he was for the moment. He scraped over the last few inches of the bar and thankfully felt water cover his dorsal fin once more.

Darting, with every fibre tensed, he shot downstream like an arrow. Behind him the children splashed noisily. Suddenly the water became deeper ; he dived and knew he had reached the main stream again. He had entered the wide pool at the foot of the rapids below the dam, and rejoiced to feel deep water again over him. He swam straight towards the centre of the pool where a great sunken tree-stump lay, black with age and decay. It had been washed out, years past, during flood-time, roots and all, and now rested, half buried in silt. Under its twisted bulk Moby hid himself.

His body was sore where the boy's fingers had roughly grasped him, and much of the slime had been rubbed from his body. This slime acts as a protection for the trout against parasites and fish fungus. Moby felt sick and frightened. He cowered in his dark retreat until nightfall. Then he smelled the strong scent of a mink and slipped away like a shadow, to a hollow beneath a massive lichen-clad rock-face, where great ferns dabbled their long green fronds in the twisting current.

Here he lurked for some days until nature had repaired the slime-coat on his body, and his stiff muscles no longer troubled him. Later, in the big pool he met and remained near another trout that had descended the brook or shot the dam ; a three-quarter-pound female. She was beginning to sense the seasonal urge to ascend the stream ; the slowly forming eggs that pulsed within her body were sending their message to her subconscious brain. A week of heavy autumnal rains swelled the low water that confined her to the pool. The brook through which Moby had passed became a torrent, though still an easier climb than that of the main rapids, which had they attempted would have ended fruitlessly for them at the dam.

They fought their way up the brook, she doggedly, Moby exultantly ; leaping the short falls over the rock-ledges, resting in the lee of small boulders, until they had attained the river's deeps at the head of the dam. Each day they were farther upstream, and nights of frost which dyed the maples scarlet, hastened them on still farther. Another male tried persistently to join them, but Moby finally drove him off, biting angrily at him with his hooked lower jaw until he left them in peace. Other small males appeared and hovered near them occasionally, but Moby's size kept them at a distance.

The female turned eventually from the river into a side-stream, and at last, heavy with her ripened eggs, she chose her spawning bed of clean sandy gravel. With her broad outspread tail she fanned and shovelled the gravel until the result pleased her, then turning on her side she began to lay.

The scent of the eggs drove Moby into a wild ecstasy of madness. He cared nothing for enemies or dangers ; the eggs, the eggs only, filled his world. Three days they passed on the spawning bed, where his fertilising milt

quicken the tiny globes. Later, he drove away his weakened mate when she would have devoured them in her hunger, and kept jealous guard until hunger in turn made him forget them. Not that he would have eaten the precious eggs; the strange inscrutable laws of the universal Giver of life withheld him and made him their fierce guardian while he remained near them.

But hunger drove at last, and he forgot them, as all creatures of the wild seem to forget things. The winter came again, spring followed, and Moby hunted the river, a full two-pounder. Now he feared only the larger birds, the bitterns, hawks, and herons, and the animals of prey that ranged the river. All summer he hunted and added to his weight. In the following autumn a lynx almost scooped him in one night, slapping its wicked paw down from the over-hanging branch on which it crouched, and cruelly scarring his broad back. From this escape he learned to avoid swimming near the surface under low-hanging trees, but the slow-healing wound left a lighter-coloured scar ever afterwards, from which he was soon to gain his nickname.

Early in the next spring he was hooked again, and put up a wild fight for five minutes, until a sudden plunge as the landing-net slid towards him broke the slight hold of the fly hook and he found himself free once more.

The fisherman, a friend of the Owner, had seen the scar on his shoulder, however, and christened him 'Moby Dick' after the fabulous whale, under which name he rapidly gained a reputation. When he had broken free he plunged to the bottom of a deep rock-littered pool and sulked with his stiff jaw until midnight. Then he swam furtively out and ranged the depths of the pool savagely, hunting young crawfish.

Flies, his instinct told him, could be dangerous and might be connected with the strange two-legged creatures that occasionally roved the banks or waded in the stream. He was fond of flies—dragon-flies, stone-flies and May-flies particularly. He liked to feed quietly and steadily on them, when a hatch was coming out; but they must look and smell right. He would rise gently at a floating fly, cautiously inhaling the water through his tiny sensitive nostrils as he approached, and if the right smell were missing he would swerve deftly aside, and a disappointed fisherman would mutter strange words to himself.

He loved to jump, to fling himself high from the water for the sheer surging joy of life that was in him. He would jump with snapping jaws at a bright butterfly hovering two feet over the surface; or at a young fledgeling bird, fluttering clumsily on its first flight. On moonlight nights, when huge grey moths winged over the shining river, a great splash would betray his exultant form gleaming momentarily in the air like a silver bar. But for all this he was not hooked again that year.

As he grew older he became increasingly carnivorous, feeding more and more on crawfish and minnows. Many a young field-mouse vanished with a sudden swirl into his capacious sharp-toothed jaws, and once he pulled down a bat that skimmed the water over his pool. This he did not eat, but tousled it about in sheer wantonness, leaving its bitten carcass to wash up on a sand-bar next morning. The crawfish finished it.

Advancing age and weight made him more set in his habits, as is the case with all creatures, human or otherwise. When he had reached a weight of over four pounds he adopted a favourite pool in the river, between two sets of rapids. At the top end the Owner had built a small

electric power-house to supply his estate. A flume led to it from the dam at the head of the upper rapids. The pool itself was about a hundred and fifty yards in length, and was dotted, especially at its lower end where the rapids began again, with round-topped boulders, rubbed smooth on by-gone glaciers. In the very centre of the pool, where the water was eight feet deep, a single rock pushed its nose above the surface.

The power-house had a small window overlooking his pool, and the man who came to tend the power-plant often saw Moby when he leaped. Occasionally he would stealthily lower a night-line baited with fat lobworms; but Moby was too wise and cautious for him and would nip the loose wriggling ends off the worms very neatly without touching the hook. At last the man told about the big trout to his employer, the Owner, who came and tempted Moby with artful flies, but had little success; neither he nor the friends he often brought with him, though they tried persistently.

Once, indeed, Moby rose to a floating cork-bodied May-fly but broke away by sheer weight at the very instant of the strike.

Finally, late one summer evening during a light shower of rain, the Owner hooked him on a silver-bodied streamer fly that looked like a minnow. He called excitedly to his friend, 'I've got Moby on at last.'

This time Moby had to fight. He darted like a torpedo to the foot of the pool as the tight line behind him cut the water-surface with a hiss. He had thought to dash down the lower rapids, but the steady strain of the bent rod made him turn aside and kept him from the main current that would have helped him. He paused a moment to gather strength, angrily shaking his head and pushing with his tough tongue at the hook in his jaw, trying to work it

loose. But the Owner kept his line taut and Moby could not get his tongue under the bend of the hook. He sensed himself being slowly towed across the pool, shoreward, and made an abrupt rush upstream, trying to get slack line. The Owner was wise, and his rod-tip went up as he reeled quickly. Moby could not gain the loose line he wanted. Still he was not yet really afraid—somehow, he felt, he would surely get rid of that strain on his jaw.

Suddenly he was aware of the landing net as it lay under water just ahead. A vision came to him, dim, but not forgotten—of the children's net that had once closed round him long ago in the mill-flow. A mad panic awoke in him. He twisted, swerving and straining with every muscle in his lithe body working, and made a dash for the rock that lay in the centre of the pool. Now he knew fear; and fear gave him added strength. The rock grew close, only a couple of feet from him now, but the strain on him was telling. He rose towards the surface, gaining a little line thereby. He broke water, wallowing, and lashing his broad tail. The Owner was afraid of losing him and relaxed the strain slightly. It was just enough; Moby dived once more and hugged the rock round which he managed to turn.

The line now lay partly against the rock, which thus took some of the pull. Moby panted, his gill-covers opening and shutting rapidly. Inch by inch, he worked farther along the rock, round the curve of which the line was snubbed, and the strain on him eased proportionately.

The Owner knew what had happened, and tried to scare Moby from his temporary refuge by tapping the butt of his rod to send vibrations through the line. Moby hated that, but stayed grimly where he was. He must regain strength and wind before moving. At intervals he slapped

at the leader with his tail, trying to break it from the hold on his jaw, but it was difficult to hit. He rubbed the hook against a jagged edge of rock without loosening it. Time dragged on.

The owner grew impatient. He knew Moby was on the far side of the rock and still hooked, for he could feel a heavy twitch on his line now and then. But it was fast growing dark, and after dark he would have less chance than ever of landing the fish. He conferred with his friend, and decided he would work upstream to a point where he could wade across the rapids at the base of the power-house. Having then arrived at the same side of the rock as Moby he would loosen line and attempt to throw a loose loop over the low top of the rock, thereby getting a direct pull on the fish again. It was a good idea if it would work.

Moby lay quiet, though his strength had greatly revived. He tugged, once in a while, at the line, but there was no slack forthcoming. Then quite abruptly the strain relaxed. The Owner had crossed the stream and loosened his line so as to throw the loop. But Moby lost no time. As he felt the pull vanish he shot downstream, planing surface-ward at the same moment. There was a fountain of flying spray as he jumped. The line jarred as Moby descended on it at its instant of tightening. The leader snapped and Moby leaped a second time, triumphant in his sudden freedom. Afterwards, at supper, the Owner swore that Moby had come up again to laugh at him.

His fame increased and spread among fishermen, but he was wiser and more cunning than ever, after this last narrow escape. Hooked he was, it must be admitted, at rare intervals, but always on the finest of gut, which he broke every time. Those who used thick gut never rose him and only wasted their efforts.

Strange and weird legends of the Paul Bunyan ¹ type have arisen, glorifying his size and prowess ; such as that his favourite den is up the flume, the interior walls of which he has tastefully decorated with dry flies ; that he will swim below the power-house window on starry nights and growl there ; that he has sprouted a pair of horns wherewith he hunts and gores large bass ; that if you fall into the power-house pool Moby will 'get' you.

But he is still there—more than a mere legend. The power-house pool is 'Moby's Pool' to all the fishermen who know that river. It is customary to throw a fly over the pool, but more as a respectful gesture of salutation to an honourable foe than with any real hope of rising him.

To-day he must be all of eight pounds. One wonders sometimes as to what his ultimate fate may be and likes fervently to hope that rather than ending in the savage clutch of some prowling bear, or slowly giving way to the infirmities of age and perishing miserably, to be washed up and devoured by wretched scavenging birds, that he will eventually die in gallant battle at the end of a good fisherman's line. Moby ! I drink your Health.

Montreal.

¹ A mythical lumberjack hero whose fabulous accomplishments out-rival the exploits of Hercules.

THE SHADOW OF THE GATES.

BY W. A. BREYFOGLE.

THE ship that should have waited at Pydna had sailed without him. For the first time in thirty years, Ephialtes made up his mind to journey overland to Athens. All the way through Thessaly he told himself there was no danger. He need not stop. He was as safe in Greece, after all these years, as in Macedonia. But none of his reasonings helped him when he crossed the border into Malis. When he lifted his eyes, late one afternoon, and saw Thermopylæ standing over him, his heart hammered in his breast like a girl's.

It was not all fear. Ephialtes was coming home. From the highest point of the pass he could see the roofs of the village beneath him, a long way off. His knees shook and he had to sit down. Thirty years? It might have been no more than a day. The great shadow of the hills crept over the village, as he remembered it creeping in his boyhood. Suddenly he didn't care that Ariston was waiting for him in Athens. Ariston and Athens, Macedonia and the tribes receded in his mind to phantoms he might have dreamed. Nothing was real but the roofs of Malis, the quiet fields there and his own great longing for them.

He sat for a long time, until the tumult within him subsided a little. There was only an hour of daylight left, and he was far from any shelter. Unless—— He turned the idea over in his mind. A day earlier, he would not have entertained it for a moment. But now he scarcely hesitated. His eyes were very bright. There was an inn in the village. He would spend the night there,

It was more tavern than inn. The host, Timoleon, was greatly pleased to have a traveller put up there for the night. 'You would think, with the pass so near, that we'd get a good many. But they go by. Nothing happens in Malis. Your first time here?'

Ephialtes nodded, without changing expression. 'I'm from Athens. Ariston is my name, the son of Polycleitus.'

'From Athens!' said the inn-keeper, on a note of respect.

Ephialtes tilted his cup, watching the wine in it lap up towards the brim. 'To be frank, I thought of going on past myself. But the pass up there set me thinking. Everyone's heard about the great fight, the time the Persians came. I was thinking that you people here must know what really happened. You saw it all.'

'I can tell you whatever you want to know. I'm from Locris. It was before I came here, but I've heard the older men speak of it. Once they talked of nothing else. Now, of course, many of them are dead. Thirty years bring changes, even to Malis. Was it about Leonidas you wanted to hear?'

'Well, yes. It has to do with Leonidas. A brave man, and he had a captain's eye. He chose a good position to defend. But what interests me particularly is the rumour I keep hearing. I've heard that he would have held the pass against all the Great King's host, but that he was betrayed. Do you know anything about that?'

'It's true. A man from Malis betrayed him. His name was Ephialtes, the son of Eurydemos.'

He kept his voice casual. 'It's true, then! How did it happen?'

'This Ephialtes was hardly more than a boy. He lived here in the village. But his mother's father had a place up

in the hills, west of the Gates. A charcoal-burner, I've been told. As a boy, Ephialtes was often there. He knew the hills as boys do know them. Well, there's a goat-path of sorts, a mile beyond Thermopylæ, and that was the path he showed to the Persians. Leonidas knew of it, too. He had put an outpost of his Phocian allies there, not really expecting an attack. But it was a wild, wet night when the Persians climbed up—Hydarnes, with the Immortals—and the Phocians fled. In the morning Leonidas found the Persians behind him as well as in front. You know what happened after that.'

'What made Ephialtes do it?'

'I can tell you, though there aren't many who know about it now. There was a farmer, his name was Athenades, and old Eurydemus, Ephialtes' father, owned land next to his holding. There was a dispute about the title to it, and Athenades won, when it came to law. Eurydemus died soon after that, some said, of vexation at the award, and his property passed to Ephialtes. Now the land in dispute was a good field, between the road and the sea. That year it stood deep in heavy-headed grain, and Athenades liked to boast of it. But one night when the grain was ripe and dry, ready for the sickle, Ephialtes set fire to it. He was seen, and he fled northward and fell in with the Persians. He needed money and he knew about the path.'

Ephialtes studied the pattern on his cup. 'Then, if there had never been a dispute about that field, or perhaps if Athenades hadn't boasted of his grain, the Great King might never have passed Thermopylæ?'

'It's true. A queer thing is that Athenades was ruined when he won that award. He had to borrow, the year that his crops were burned. You know what money-lenders are; he never got out of their clutches, especially

after he took to drink. Strange, isn't it? No one profited but Ephialtes, the traitor.'

Ephialtes asked, 'What became of him?'

'I don't know. He was never seen again.'

'Dead, I suppose?'

'Perhaps. But if he's still alive, he's probably a rich man by now, with the money he must have got from the Persians. It wouldn't be hard for him to turn it into more.'

'I've heard that the Amphictyons put a price on his head, as a traitor to every city in Greece. Does that still stand?'

'I suppose so. I never thought of it, it's so long ago. And as you said, the man is probably dead.'

Ephialtes resumed his journey in the morning. In Malis he had seen no one he knew. More important, he had seen no one who knew him. Thirty years had passed, and a great many were dead. Others, like Ephialtes himself, were changed beyond recognition. He was past fifty now, and the beard he had grown in Macedonia was shot with grey. A long scar running across his right cheek-bone had drawn that side of his face out of shape. He was heavier than he had been as a boy, and his years in the north and at Athens had taken from him every vestige of the dialect of Malis. These were the thoughts that beguiled his way southward. And whither they led Ephialtes knew very well.

They led back to Malis, the road above all others that he wanted to take. The time comes when the diversions of a man's youth lose their savour, when he ceases to care for wine and dice and girls. At fifty, however vigorous his health, his thoughts turn to quietness and his own place. Even the Macedonians, even the Epirotes know the tug that draws the wildest tribesman home at last. They are free to go. But Ephialtes thought that the lack of that freedom,

for him, only made Malis twice as dear, doubly sweet because he must steal back to it under a name not his own. Did a man know what was worth his love until he had lost it? He didn't, Ephialtes could tell.

It was dangerous. No one cared about his past in Macedonia. Athens was big, and had other things to think of now than Thermopylæ. In either place he was safe. But Malis had a long memory, and there were men still alive who knew all about the death of Leonidas. Yes, but they would think of a beardless Ephialtes, slender and speaking their own broad dialect, with no disfiguring scar. He could count upon that. Trust him for a story to account for the presence of Ariston of Athens among them! Only make the story gripping enough and they would never see through to the man telling it. But his deliberations yielded more and more to a haunting insistence. He had to go back. There was nothing else worth desiring, nothing but the sea and the sky and the stony earth of Malis. Reasonably, he couldn't account for it. It was beyond reason, as it was beyond his power to resist. He only knew that, asleep or waking, Malis filled his mind. Better to live there, even with a sword above his head, than drag out an empty existence elsewhere. When he reached Athens, he would tell Ariston, whose name he had borrowed, to look for a new partner. Ephialtes would trade to Macedonia and Epirus no more. He was going home.

When he lay on the narrow bed that first night, his dreams were all auspicious. Brief snatches of the old days swam up before his mind, smoke rising in the early morning, the first snow of the year on the hills, the fishing-vessels in the gulf. Deeper in sleep, he met a phantom soldiery, Spartans, by the look of them. They stared at him with eyes grave but not reproachful. Before they passed they raised their

spears in salute. He awoke in the middle of the night with that magnanimous gesture vividly before him. The shades understood. The sound of waves in the gulf filled the room, the many odours of the summer night. It was an end to wandering. When he went down to join the shades himself, let Malis have his bones.

He slept late, weary from long travel. It was a market-day, and the inn was full. But Timoleon came up at once when Ephialtes appeared. 'You slept well? They will bring you the bread and wine. It's an honour for us to have you back.'

The truth was, Timoleon was inordinately curious. What brought the man from Athens back a second time was beyond him. He had a nose for mystery, and an inn-keeper ought to know the categories of men. But this Ariston was something new in Timoleon's experience. He busied himself about the three-legged table set before his guest. 'Just tell me if anything's missing. We live very simply here, not like the places where you've been.'

'Where have I been?'

'Why, Athens! Or in the north.'

'So you knew I'd been in the north?'

'You came down from there, the time before.'

'So I did, on my way to Athens.'

He drummed with his fingers on the table-top. Timoleon would have liked to question him, if he had dared. But then, unexpectedly, he began to talk. Everyone listened to him, quite openly. For some reason that seemed to please him. It was hardly vanity. More likely, he thought to satisfy their curiosity once and for all.

'I'm an Athenian, but I'm not going back there. Nor back to the north, to Macedonia. That's for younger men. It's a hard life, trading with the tribes, half-wild as they are.'

I've got a little money, and I'm tired of travelling. I'm alone in the world, too, free to do as I like. For the present, I thought of stopping here.'

There was a moment's silence. Then an old farmer sitting alone asked, in simple wonder, 'But why don't you go back to your own place?'

Ariston wasn't angry. 'Perhaps a stranger sees more than a native,' he suggested. 'To me, this land here seems a good land. I've seen a good many, but none fairer than Malis.'

They wrinkled their brows. To them, it went without saying that Malis was the fairest of all lands. But that was because it was the land of their birth, the land where their fathers were buried, all that, for example, Athens was to the Athenian-born. Or ought to be. It wasn't a question of comparison and choice, but of piety. What Ariston said about the beauty of Malis was not really relevant.

But, having found his way there, he seemed to intend to stay. In the uniformly fine weather he walked the roads or hired a boatman to take him along the shore. Every evening he sat in the inn and drank the local wine as if he enjoyed it. Mostly he talked with Timoleon. Except on market-days the inn had few patrons. Athenades, the farmer, came more often than that, whenever he had a little money. But Athenades was surly and a drunkard. Timoleon made shift to keep him and the stranger from meeting.

That was not hard, for Timoleon observed that the man from Athens rather avoided company than sought it. When the inn was full he kept out of sight. He seemed to have a curious aversion from the older men of the village. Timoleon had seen him leave the courtyard when two or three of them came in, and retire to his own quarters. With

young men it was different ; he sometimes struck up a conversation.

In fact, for Ephialtes, the first days there swung from happiness to moments of panic. No one knew what his outward calm cost him. Yet how sweet it was to be back in Malis ! The very earth spoke to him, and the full northern summer and the shapes of the hills. Surely it was worth the terror of coming suddenly upon a face he remembered, of steeling himself not to hurry past the slow, keen stare of those old eyes, though he felt them stabbing through him as he went by. He told himself that the very boldness of his return there was his best disguise. No one would look in Malis, in the shadow of Thermopylæ, for the traitor, Ephialtes. He thought of the story he had ready. He knew these people, shrewd in small matters, gullible in anything beyond the limits of their stony fields. They would believe what he meant to tell them.

Timoleon gave him his first chance. 'You ought to go up to the Gates,' the inn-keeper suggested one morning. 'That's worth seeing. I'll go up with you, if you like. I can tell you all about the fighting there, the time the Persians came.'

It was to Timoleon's interest that a paying guest should not weary of his stay. He could be trusted to spread any news he heard. When they were out of the village, Ephialtes said, 'They came in their hundreds of thousands, I've been told. That was the mistake, and the Great King knows it now. Another time, he will send a smaller army, but the very flower of his troops.'

Timoleon was startled. 'You think they will come again ?'

Ephialtes shrugged. 'It's common knowledge. They bide their time. We haven't seen the last of them.'

'After what Leonidas did to them, with only three hundred men?'

'They don't fear another Leonidas. They know that, the next time, Sparta will hold the Isthmus, with Corinth's help. The Spartans haven't another three hundred to throw away, for glory but no gain.'

'But the rest of us! We have no Isthmus to hold.'

'You have Thermopylæ.'

'Who's to man it?'

'It concerns all Greeks north of the Peloponnese.'

'Athens, then?'

'Athens, along with the others.'

The rough, rising ground imposed silence upon them. They were both breathing hard when they reached the highest point, where the heights close in and the road wriggles between them. Timoleon stopped. 'This is Thermopylæ.'

It was shortness of breath that made him thus laconic, but it had the effect of reverence. They had the place to themselves, and the memory of an old heroism. To the northwest the narrow passage widened and fell away towards open plains. Behind them it widened again, and there was the knoll where Leonidas had made his last stand. The stone lion to his memory crowned the knoll now, watching over the road he had barred against the Great King. The wind that was always stirring in the pass blew about the lion's lifted head. There was nothing more.

But Timoleon's thoughts were in the future, not in the past. He said, 'If you would make a stand north of the Isthmus, Thermopylæ is the only place. More than that, whoever holds the Gates has taken a long step toward hegemony of all northern Greece. Isn't that right?'

Ephialtes nodded. 'You must hold the Gates, and to do that, you must hold Malis.'

'Then,' said Timoleon triumphantly, 'Athens cannot let another city be before her! At the worst, she could hold the Gates alone. The sea is hers already.'

Ephialtes said, 'Well?'

'Well, but time presses! It isn't to be arranged overnight.'

'Of course not.' He looked away towards the north. 'Be sure that my countrymen know that.'

It worked very well. Timoleon walked home in deep thought. The men of Malis had assumed that Ariston was an exile. But was he? He didn't carry himself like one. There was nothing in Malis to attract even an exile on his private account. And what had he been doing up in Macedonia, now that Timoleon thought of it that way? Trading, Ariston said. But suppose— Suppose that Athens had an eye on Thermopylæ. Then she would consider Macedonia, too. An agreement quietly made would bring the tribes up, when the time came, against the Great King's flank and rear. A task for an able man, working unobtrusively, long before there was any rumour of a new invasion. Timoleon said nothing to his fellow-townsmen. They would not understand. But sometimes he dropped a hint to Ariston himself, and Ariston looked at him and laughed and didn't deny it. He wasn't an exile; he was one of Athens' many secret agents. And it seemed to the inn-keeper that Ariston was rather pleased than not at having his secret discovered. He must know that he would need a little discreet help, here in Malis. An inn-keeper learns to hold his tongue. Not too rigidly, since people come to an inn, after all, to hear the news. But with a nice judgment. The man from Athens could trust him. Watching him, Ephialtes was satisfied.

Because Timoleon would expect it of him, he returned to the pass several times. And, so that the inn-keeper might know where he had been, Ephialtes questioned him about it when he came back. 'That path the Persians used, to take Leonidas in the rear—how many know about that now?'

Timoleon couldn't say. 'A few days' work would make it impassable,' he suggested.

'Who lives up in the hills now?'

'In the hills?'

'Yes. On Damis's old place, for instance.'

Timoleon stared. 'Who was Damis?'

Ephialtes kept almost all the sudden fear out of his voice. 'That charcoal-burner you told me about. Ephialtes' grandfather.'

'Was that his name?'

'It's what you told me,' said Ephialtes. He must cover up the slip of his tongue, at all costs.

'I told you? But I never knew what he was called!'

Ephialtes tried impatience. 'It doesn't matter. But certainly *I* never knew! Perhaps you had heard it once, and forgotten it until now.'

'That might be.' Timoleon would not argue with a guest for the world. 'Yes, that must be it. Funny, the tricks a man's mind plays!'

'Very funny!' Ephialtes laughed, in a key unintentionally high. He didn't find out who lived on Damis's old place.

He never betrayed himself again. But there were other moments that put his heart in his mouth. Once, just as he was leaving the inn, a scuffle at the gate stopped him. The farmer Athenades was there, the worse for drink. Timoleon's serving-man had refused him entrance, and a crowd collected to enjoy the brawl. Athenades' voice overbore all others. He was shouting something about having his

crops burned, about the blood-sucking money-lenders. There was a moment, before his neighbours carried him off, when he stood staring directly at Ephialtes. With no recognition ! Ephialtes never knew how he had stood his ground. Athenades was drunk, but not past knowing a face he had good cause to remember. Ephialtes would have known him anywhere, the burly figure, the protruding eyes, the harsh voice. The moment passed, and the blood stopped drumming in Ephialtes' ears. It could mean only one thing—he was safe.

To spend his last years in Malis, to be buried in the land of his fathers. He remembered with a kind of horror his flippant acceptance of exile in his youth. Then one part of the world was as good as another, and Malis had never given him cause to love it. But he had seen men die in the far corners of Macedonia and Epirus, and heard the names of their homes on their lips—Pylos, Paros, Thera. As he grew older, he understood them. Those men were not exiles ; they could have gone back, if there had been time. To him the gods had been good—he had come home. Being a childless man, there was nothing more he could ask.

Except a little piece of native earth for his own. The inn was very well. But why shouldn't he buy land and settle down here ? No one knew him. One morning he said to Timoleon, 'I may be here for some time. I thought of buying land. You don't know of any for sale ?'

Timoleon rubbed his chin. 'It's hard to buy land hereabouts. The farms come down from fathers to sons, you see. It's a calamity when a man has to sell.'

Ephialtes knew, as well as the inn-keeper, that this was only the preliminary to long bargaining. Timoleon foresaw a commission. He added at once, 'But I'll keep it in

mind. I'm sure to hear of it, if anyone has land for sale. You'd prefer it in the hills.'

'Not in the hills, no. On the coast.' Eurydemos had never held land in the hills.

For another reason, it was the answer Timoleon had expected. Of course! A foothold on the coast could be enlarged little by little. What began as a gentleman's estate might come to shelter an Athenian garrison, on guard at the Gates. Athens held the sea, whoever marched against her by land. A private man would choose the hills, for the shore lay open to the hard wind and the waves, and what slope there was faced the north. Timoleon strove to seem innocent of these thoughts. None the less, he treated his guest with great respect.

The same thought was in the back of both their minds. Latterly Ephialtes' afternoon walks took him to a point in the road overlooking part of Athenades' land. It was the field he had won from old Eurydemos, the one where Ephialtes had set fire to the standing grain, a long time ago. Across that field was the sea, and Timoleon thought he knew what was in Ariston's mind when he stood there, staring. Thinking of his commission, Timoleon was pleased. Athenades was always pressed for money. If any land in Malis was for sale, it would be the very plot that Ariston seemed to like best.

He made a point of being attentive to the Athenian. Timoleon himself brought the water for the hand-washing, before the evening meal. That one evening, he pointed suddenly. 'You've hurt your arm. I'll get some oil and a bandage for it.'

Ephialtes looked down, puzzled. 'Oh! That's a birthmark. It's all right. Listen a moment. I was thinking this afternoon that your hard-drinking friend, Athenades,

might be willing to sell a field or two. You said he was in debt to the money-lenders.'

The harder the bargain could be made to seem, the better his commission. Timoleon thought it politic to demur. 'I hadn't thought of him. There's a place up in the hills I heard about, facing south, sheltered from the east wind. Just the thing.'

'I daresay. But can you get a plot from Athenades?'

'I can try. He won't want to sell. He holds the land from his fathers.'

Ephialtes looked at him with a smile. 'You are great people for the land of your fathers, aren't you? You must think of exile from Malis as worse than death.'

'Everyone feels that way about his fatherland,' said Timoleon, sure that he would not be contradicted. Then, because he enjoyed this borderland of mystery, he added: 'You do, yourself. When you tire of living abroad, you will go back to your own place. You will end your days where they began.'

The man from Athens wasn't offended. He repeated, 'To my own place!' Then, more briskly, slapping his hand on the table, 'But that field Athenades won from—what was his name?—Eurydemos, that's hardly the land of his fathers. Ask him to sell me that.'

Timoleon appeared to consider this notion, thoroughly familiar to him already. 'You could add to it later, as you needed more land.' He glanced up, but Ariston's face showed no concern at having his secret thoughts read. Timoleon's respect for him grew even greater. He nodded. 'I'll ask him.'

He would have liked to spin out the negotiations to a profitable length. But Athenades, as soon as the matter was mentioned, fell in with it eagerly. The field had been

his undoing. 'There's a curse on it. Time was, I hoped to clean it off by squaring accounts with the whelp Ephialtes. I prayed that something might drive him home at last. You've heard of the year he burned my grain?'

'Yes, yes!' said Timoleon, who had heard the story many times. 'A pity you didn't catch him. There was a reward out for him, too. That would have come to you. The Amphictyons wanted him, for a traitor.'

Athenades grunted. 'That's nothing to me. I don't care for the reward, and I don't know what the Amphictyons held against him. You have no time for such matters when the money-lenders get their claws into you. But you won't forget the fellow who first put you in their clutches. Take my word for that!'

He followed Timoleon into the inn on the appointed day, with the awkward gait of the farmer. His rough, stained tunic was caught up at one shoulder with a clumsy brooch, and his knotted arms were bare. He wore sandals, and a knife swung at his right side. He looked what he was, an ill man to cross. But to the Athenian he behaved with a sort of cunning deference. They went at it cautiously at first, each taking the other's measure. But an hour later the bargain was struck and the pledges given. They called for wine. Timoleon brought it himself and tactfully withdrew.

They were both elated. Ephialtes nodded across the table, but the farmer held out his cup at arm's length. Ephialtes laughed and reached out to touch his own against it. The fold of his tunic slipped back, and the birth-mark stood out on an arm much paler than Athenades' own. 'Come!' he said. 'Let's hope I have better luck with the field than you!'

Then he put his cup down slowly, untasted. 'What's

the matter?' Athenades made no answer, staring at that bare arm. The crash of the over-turned table brought the inn-keeper running. But by that time the knife-handle had ceased to twitch. The fallen man sobbed and lay still, while the blood and the spilt wine spread slowly across the flag-stones. Athenades repeated a name as if to insist upon it. 'Ephialtes! Ephialtes, the son of Eurydemos! I'd know that mark anywhere!'

He threw his head back, and there over Malis hung the Gates, Thermopylæ. Deep in their shadow crouched the stone lion that kept watch there, now that Leonidas could guard the way no more. But Athenades looked through and beyond that. His voice was hoarse, and his face shone. 'The gods sent him back! It's Ephialtes! It's the man who burned my standing grain!'

THE ISIS.

Lissom trees in a gentle breeze

And craft too low to feel it.

A whispered word from a youth is heard

And the answer soft to seal it.

Many a time in a far-off clime

We long for the things that are done with

But in our heart there's a special part

For that river we had such fun with.

S. M. THOMPSON.

BY THE WAY.

BY the first of February thoughts are beginning, whatever the weather, to turn to longer days and the hints of returning Spring. We have passed through some curious times, a long spell of unusually warm weather so that it was possible to find buds bursting in the December woods, then a short, sudden snap of intense cold, followed by heavy falls of snow so that all children could rejoice in a white world—to many their first white Christmas Day—and discover to their rather indignant surprise that snow-balling was chilly work for the fingers—and now none can say whether the Spring of 1939 will be early or late. One thing only mankind knows and that is that it will come: in that respect Faith remains absolute. Let the world be what it will good or evil Spring is on its way: that all implicitly believe, the one completely assured piece of confidence in the Western world—and as such of supreme value. If we can indeed believe that unquestioningly—as we do, one and all—so also we could, if we would, believe other things also that Life is not all winter, for example, that our neighbours, whether across the road or across the Channel are not all compact of severity and so forth and so on. It would be worth while at least to try to extend the area of our belief in beneficence—it would both astonish and delight humanity to note how wide, if we did, that area would in all verity almost automatically become.

* * *

It would appear that the laws relating to our thoroughfares are as antiquated as the minds of some of our rulers. If a

car is parked two and a half hours in a place where it may only be parked for two, an offence is committed ; but if that place is an authorized parking place in the hours of day only and a car is parked there for four hours or more at night, no offence is committed unless obstruction can be proved—which is both difficult and costly. Again, if a van draws up outside a man's house and begins unloading its wares for transport to a shop 28 yards away in front of which is already a van, no offence is committed, however absolute the barrier presented to the owner of the house and however often the unloading is performed. It has been necessary to refer in these columns on more than one occasion to the excessive vanity, erroneously applied, that describes Man scientifically as *homo sapiens* : here is a further example of the misnomer—and he still continues blithely to prohibit whistling for taxis and to allow the use of the pneumatic drill. He enjoys in fact labelling himself as incorrigible.

* * *

Scotland for ever !—It was high time the artistic glories of the great northern nation were shown in London. How well shown they are in the current Exhibition at Burlington House and how well worth showing—a revelation to some, a confirmation to others and a delight to all.

* * *

Why is it, I wonder, that invitations to gentlemen are so frequently sent out in a form in which they are never sent to ladies ? It must be a common happening to many a gentleman to receive a card inviting him 'and lady.' He is named ; it is made perfectly clear that his personal presence is desired—very complimentary, no doubt to him. But what about his lady ? If, as is still quite usually the case he is respectably, and even in some cases happily, married, he is put into the position—which every wife will certainly

agree is an entirely wrong one for him to occupy—of being able to say to her in a lordly fashion ‘I could take any lady I like, you will observe ; but I will be gracious and take you.’ Or still worse when, as is almost equally as frequent, his card of invitation merely says ‘and friend.’ Whilst it may be admitted that there are husbands who are so fortunate as to have retained the friendship of their wives, it is surely wrong—and it is indubitably resented by many—that the wife, if wanted (or permitted perhaps would be a more accurate word) should not be named. After all it is not a matter of much clerical difficulty to ascertain whether your guest is or is not married and living domestically : a private host or hostess has to find out ; why not a society or public body ? And yet such regularly offend. If the cards were sent to the ladies with an ‘and gentleman’ or ‘and friend’ upon them, the result would be of interest.

* * *

I find the following advice given by the undergraduate editor of a new poetry magazine for the youth of Oxford : ‘A word on technique. If the subject matter is up to date, technique is not worth bothering about. But don’t scorn rhyme nor the traditional metres—the best of the moderns have used them frequently. And if you use *vers libre* it is as well to give it rhythm and possibly form.’

There is something so disingenuous and so artless in this advice that it is irresistibly comic. ‘Play the violin, boys, but don’t bother to learn how to do it : be up to date, that is all that matters ; and, besides, that avoids all the difficulties.’ The cover design shows a formless man propping up a broken lamp-post which leans over him drunkenly : it is not clear whether or no this is intended as a pictorial exemplification of the modern poetry advocated within.

* * *

Extract from a recent paragraph in an evening paper :
 'The house, built in 1780, contains many heirlooms saved when the building was destroyed by fire 55 years ago.' This is first cousin to the celebrated notice : 'Next Friday being Ash-Wednesday, there will be an open-air meeting in the vestry to decide what colour the church shall be white-washed.'

* * *

A party of students recently marched through Gordon Square, Bloomsbury so we are told, carrying a banner with the words, 'We want America.' Why? What would they do with it? Give it to Germany?

* * *

'In books,' writes John Cowper Powys in the introduction to his new volume, *The Pleasures of Literature* (Cassell, 12s. 6d. n.), 'dwell all the demons and all the angels of the human mind. It is for this reason that a book-shop—especially a secondhand book-shop—is an arsenal of explosives, an armoury of revolutions, an opium-den of reactions' and of course also has the keys of heaven, as Mr. Powys adds not in words but throughout the 660 pages of his book. He takes the reader on a wide and mighty river, a pilgrimage to many a land and age, Greece, Russia, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, America and of course, most of all, England, beginning with the Bible and ending with Proust—'addressed' as he says, 'obviously to people who love reading,' dealing with those things, namely, books which, as his conclusion states, 'passing into the souls of those that feed upon them' are likely enough to outlive all other products of time. As a book about books this with its range and its scholarship and its meditative comment must rank high.

* * *

It used to be, perhaps it still is, considered an artistic wrong

to tell a story in pictorial form : and yet year after year the 'picture of the year' in the Royal Academy was almost invariably of this kind, proving at any rate that those who 'know nothing about Art but know what they like' are greatly in the majority. They are also in line with many a famous illustrator as can readily be seen by a study of Henry Reitlinger's very attractive book, *From Hogarth to Keene* (Methuen, 15s. n.). This is a finely produced volume with 87 excellent 'reproductions of black and white drawings by English story-telling artists and illustrators' and will be enjoyed by the amateur and the professional critic. It proves yet again what an artistic race the English in reality are.

* * *

It was said a while ago by observers of the trend of modern literature that just as the three-decker volume had completely vanished, so would the biography of similar, or greater, length. But observers are not always right : the very long novel often containing quite as many words as those of old time published in three volumes has several times of late returned and gained the height of favour—*Anthony Adverse* and *Gone with the Wind* are two examples ; and biography, when the subject is of outstanding interest and the author unusually readable, provides exceptions of a like nature : Winston Churchill has done it in his *Marlborough* and now Arthur Bryant provides us with the third of the four instalments of *Samuel Pepys*. This third, entitled *The Saviour of the Navy* (Cambridge University Press, 12s. 6d. n.), shows Pepys at his zenith under James II and takes him until his final fall under William : it has none of the immense sparkle, none of the impropriety and humorous impudence of Pepys's early manhood, but it is far more important, and in Mr. Bryant's hands never for a moment becomes heavy. It is

throughout of exceeding interest, the crescendo of a career not only great in itself but enduring in its influence.

* * *

From the Cambridge University Press comes also a biography wholly different, but similarly attractive: Helen Morris in her *Portrait of a Chef* (10s. 6d. n.) has treated authoritatively and yet lightly the engaging career of Alexis Soyer, 1809-58. Celebrated in connexion with three such diverse affairs as the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Reform Club, and the Crimean War, he is to-day best remembered by his invention of the Soyer stove, still 'among the most essential articles of camp equipment': in his own day he was a notable figure, so that Florence Nightingale described his death as 'a great disaster,' and, eccentric as he was, it could be said of him that the only thing he never curried was favour.

* * *

The fine art of murder proceeds merrily, and as all the most likely plots get used up—for after all there are only a certain number of permutations and combinations possible, according to the rules of this twentieth-century literary game—so has it become necessary for writers, who desire to excel in it, to add on other virtues than those of mere ingenuity. The detective story can be also a fine novel; and among those who are helping towards that consummation the work of Josephine Bell is beginning now to stand out conspicuously. Her latest, *Port of London Murders* (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.), is not merely a good story of murder, it is also an attractively written account of life—certain aspects of it at any rate—in and around the Port of London: the characterization is skilled, the descriptions are admirable and the whole is a very satisfactory specimen of a modern tale of death-dealing doom.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 184.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 28th February.

'Sleep, ——— heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, ——— winds, as he sleeps now.'

1. 'The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft,
And ——— swallows twitter in the skies.'
2. 'O, the ——— shall run red
With redundancy of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,'
3. 'Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when ——— -heats are near'
4. 'Near to the silver ———
Sirena dwelleth ;'
5. 'Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet ———aby,'
6. 'Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this ———,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up ;'

Answer to Acrostic 182, December number : 'Or lesser breeds without the law—— (Kipling : 'Recessional'). 1. LamB (Thomas Edward Brown : 'Dora'). 2. ÈtheR (Rossetti : 'The Blessed Damozel'). 3. SeverE (George Meredith : 'Phoebus with Admetus'). 4. SpherE. (George Meredith : 'Phoebus with Admetus'). 5. EnD (Browning : 'The Last Ride Together'). 6. RoseS (Tennyson : 'Maud').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. C. K. Scriven, Crimble Green, Burniston, Scarborough, and the Rev. G. Young, Old Oxyard, Oare, Marlborough, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

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